

# DSHS changes to Covid-19 website provide sporadic updates

Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Covid-19 dashboard received a new look on December 11, 2020. Not only was the appearance of the website changed, but they also changed how different categories and percentages reported were calculated.

The overall case numbers reported prior to update only included cases confirmed by testing. Now DSHS is reporting probable cases as well. These probable cases are being "included in the calculations of active and recovered cases". DSHS defines probable cases as "those identified through antigen testing or a combination of symptoms and a known exposure without a more likely diagnosis".

With the first reports following the updates, almost all

counties saw a huge jump in both the number of active cases and the number of recoveries. However in the time period beginning with the update on December 11 and ending with the December 14 reports, unbelievably no changes to any categories have been reported for Mitchell and Nolan counties. These two counties also show absolutely no probable cases at all. In Coke County and some of the other counties in our area, numbers that should only rise, such as the overall confirmed cases and overall probable case numbers, have jumped both up and down over the last few days. The state seems to be having to work out some of the kinks of the new reporting.

As we reported last week, it has been difficult to know whose numbers are accurate

since the very beginning last spring. Often numbers have been attributed to "Tom Green County" or the "City of San Angelo" that are actually regional numbers gathered from citizens who may have been tested or hospitalized in San Angelo but are not residents of Tom Green County. The numbers received sporadically by local officials include more detail, but are usually a number of days old and are not as current as the numbers listed on the DSHS's website. These numbers on the DSHS website are supposed to be updated on a daily basis, but as mentioned above, it appears since the changes that some counties have not been updated at all.

On Monday, December 14, 2020, DSHS reported Coke County had 197 cases overall confirmed by testing (2 less than the previous week); 137 overall probable cases; 63 active cases from both confirmed and probable categories 9 fatalities and 262 recoveries of cases

confirmed by testing and probable.

On Monday, December 14, 2020, Coke County Courthouse was once again open to officials, employees, and the public.

As of Monday, December 14, Texas is reporting 1,337,096 confirmed overall cases and 144,516 probable cases for a total of 1,481,612. Of this total, 259,053 are considered active and 1,185,628 are recovered. DSHS is reporting 23,937 fatalities through Monday with 9,304 Texans hospitalized with Covid-19. Over 13.5 million tests have been given to date in Texas. Fortunately, the fatality rate in Texas continues to decline.

Monday's statistics for the surrounding counties are listed below.

**Tom Green County**  
Overall Confirmed Cases - 3,681 Probable Cases - 4,725 Active Cases - 1,456; Fatalities - 151; Recoveries - 6,799

**Taylor County**  
Overall Confirmed Cases - 4,236 Probable Cases - 5,258;

Active Cases - 2,510 Fatalities - 146; Recoveries - 3,265

**Sterling County**  
Overall Confirmed Cases - 43 Probable Cases - 39; Active Cases - 12; Fatalities - 1; Recoveries - 69

**Runnels County**  
Overall Confirmed Cases - 466 Probable Cases - 218; Active Cases - 79; Fatalities - 13; Recoveries - 598

**Nolan County**  
Overall Confirmed Cases - 923 Probable Cases - 0; Active Cases - 265 Fatalities - 12; Recoveries - 615

**Mitchell County**  
Overall Confirmed Cases - 395 Probable Cases - 0; Active Cases - 83; Fatalities - 7; Recoveries - 298

**Irion County**  
Overall Confirmed Cases - 29 Probable Cases - 31; Active Cases - 8; Fatalities - 0; Recoveries - 52

**Concho County**  
Overall Confirmed Cases - 128; Probable Cases - 54; Active Cases - 27; Fatalities - 3; Recoveries - 172

terminations, transfers, etc.

Commissioner Millican made a motion to approve the extension of the Emergency Disaster Declaration for Coke County. Commissioner Sefcik seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Commissioner Sefcik made a motion to approve the Auditor's Annual Report. He was seconded by Commissioner Williams and the motion carried.

Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the agreement with Regional Public Defender Office Local Government Corporation.

Commissioner Sefcik seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Commissioner Sefcik made a motion to approve the members of the Coke County Historical Commission Board for 2021-2022. Commissioner Millican seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Commissioner Williams made a motion to prohibit certain fireworks in unincorporated areas of Coke County. Commissioner Sefcik seconded the motion and the motion carried.

County Treasurer Therese Emert reminded the Court that

timesheets need to be turned into her office and they must be filled out completely and signed by the supervisor.

Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the bids for purchase of property held in trust by Coke County (line items 15-20). Commissioner Sefcik seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the bills and was seconded by Commissioner Millican. The motion carried.

Judge Spain adjourned the meeting at 10:08 am.

but we shouldn't have to fight it. We shouldn't have to find reasons to escape it.

We should, however, look for ways that we can improve the holidays for our own families, our communities, and society at large. For too many friends, loved ones, and neighbors, a "perfect" Christmas isn't a consideration rather, too many folks are just trying to survive Christmas. Whether it is the expense of Christmas, the difficulty of facing it without loved ones, or dealing with strained or distant family

relationships, struggling at Christmas crosses all socioeconomic lines. Others are already struggling with depression and other mental health issues. The pressures associated with the holidays - obligations for family, friends, work, church, and community - can be completely overwhelming. Mental health concerns become bigger during the holidays. Too many of our friends and family are not sure if they CAN make it through December. Do we even realize that?

*(Continued on next page)*



## Outward Expressions of Christmas

By James M. Decker

Last week, I wrote about the inevitable struggles of the Christmas season and I encouraged each of us to focus on hope. That hope is exemplified by Merle Haggard's words in his iconic song "If We Make It Through December." Today, as I have done in the past, I want to talk about actually expressing the hope that underlies Christmas.

Ultimately, Christmas itself is about hope. It is not about exchanging gifts, Christmas decorations, family get-togethers or any of the other things that can be enjoyable. It is about the hope that came from a baby, born of a virgin in that humble manger in Bethlehem so many years ago. Now, do not misunderstand me - there is nothing inherently wrong with those other aspects of Christmas in modern society,

so long as they make Christmas more enjoyable and do not make it worse. I think we have

all fought the cycle of stress, exhaustion and annoyance that crops up around the holidays,

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*Holiday Hours:*

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In Observance Of



# Christmas Day

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