

Governor Greg Abbott

For Immediate Distribution | April 17, 2020 | (512) 463-1826
Governor Abbott Issues Executive Order Establishing Strike Force To Open Texas

Directs Select Services To Reopen, Closes Schools For Remainder Of Academic Year

AUSTIN - Governor Greg Abbott today held a press conference where he issued three new Executive Orders to begin the process of reopening the state of Texas while revising hospital capacity and certain social distancing guidelines. Within the orders, select activities and services that pose minimal to no threat of spreading COVID-19 are allowed to reopen using a "Retail-To-Go" model, certain restrictions on surgeries have been loosened, and schools will remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 academic year.

Within these orders, the Governor has established [the Strike Force to Open Texas](#)—a team of nationally recognized medical experts and private and public leaders who will advise the Governor on safely and strategically reopening the state of Texas.

"Texans are battling a colossal challenge—an invisible enemy that has tested our lives and our livelihoods—but overcoming challenges is part of who we are as Texans," said Governor Abbott. "We have shown that Texas can continue our efforts to contain COVID-19 while also adopting safe standards that will allow us to begin the process of reopening Texas. The Strike Force to Open Texas brings together nationally recognized medical experts with public and private sector leaders to achieve this mission. By coming together, we can get Texans back to work, practice safe standards that will prevent the spread of COVID-19, and we can overcome this pandemic."

James Huffines will lead the advisory strike force and Mike Toomey will serve as Chief Operating Officer. Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, House Speaker Dennis Bonnen, Attorney General Ken Paxton, and Comptroller Glenn Hegar will serve as consulting members.

In addition, Governor Abbott has appointed Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Commissioner John Hellerstedt, MD, as Chief Medical Officer of the strike force. Dr. Hellerstedt will be supported by three Chief Medical Advisors:

John Zerwas, MD, Executive Vice-Chancellor for Health Affairs at the University of Texas System

Mark McClellan, MD, PhD, Former Food and Drug Administration Commissioner and U.S. Medicaid and Medicare Administrator

Parker Hudson, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine and Infectious Diseases at Dell Medical School and program director for the Internal Medicine Residency

These health experts will develop a medical architecture to comprehensively test and trace COVID-19 that will enable Texans to gradually and safely begin the process of returning to work and other activities.

The medical team will work alongside a Special Advisory Council who will share innovative ideas to help businesses strategically reopen while containing the spread of COVID-19. The council consists of 39 business leaders representing the state's regions and industries. The advisory council will collaborate with working groups to devise strategies, statewide standards, and appropriate time frames to reopen the Lone Star State while prioritizing the health and safety of all Texans.

The strike force will immediately begin providing input on potential additional openings of activities and services in Texas consistent with guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Governor will announce a revised plan for the state based on these initial recommendations on April 27.

Special Advisory Council members include:

Arcilia Acosta: President and CEO, CARCON Industries & Construction

Paul Andrews, Jr.: Founder and CEO, TTI Inc.

Mark Bivins: Rancher, partner in Corsino Cattle Company

Kathy Britton: CEO and Owner, Perry Homes

Brad Brookshire: Chairman and CEO, Brookshire Grocery Co.

J. Bruce Bugg, Jr.: Chairman, Texas Transportation Commission

Alonzo Cantu: President & CEO of Cantu Construction

Bobby Cox: Owner and operator, Bobby Cox Companies, Inc.

Adriana Cruz: Executive Director, Economic Development & Tourism Division, Office of the Governor

Michael Dell: Chairman and CEO, Dell Technologies

Scott Dueser: Chairman, President & CEO, First Financial Bank

Don Evans: Chairman of the President George W. Bush Foundation, Chairman of Permian Strategic Partnership

Tilman Fertitta: Chairman, CEO, and sole owner, Landry's, Inc.

Richard Fisher: Senior Advisor, Barclays and Former President & CEO, the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas

Rick Francis: Chairman of the Board, WestStar Bank Holding Company, Inc.

Printice Gary: Founding Partner/Principal and CEO, Carleton Companies

Brad Heffington: Owner of Heffington Farms, Inc. and Triple T Irrigation, Inc.

Jeffery D. Hildebrand: Executive Chairman and Founder, Hilcorp Energy Company

Nancy Kinder: President & CEO, Kinder Foundation

Tom Luce: Founder and Chairman, Texas 2036

Marc McDougal: CEO, McDougal Companies

Jim "Mattress Mack" McIngvale: Owner, Gallery Furniture

Drayton McLane: Chairman, McLane Group

Elaine Mendoza: Founder, President & CEO of Conceptual MindWorks, Inc

Balous Miller: Owner, Bill Miller Bar-B-Q Restaurants

Carla Moran: Ramar Communications

Dennis Nixon: CEO and Chairman of International Bank of Commerce

David Oliveira: Partner at Roerig, Oliveira & Fisher, L.L.P.

Ross Perot, Jr.: Chairman, The Perot Group

Kevin D. Roberts, Ph.D.: Executive Director, Texas Public Policy Foundation

Robert B. Rowling: Owner and Chairman, TRT Holdings, Inc.

Kendra Scott: Founder and CEO, Kendra Scott

Robert F. Smith: Founder, Chairman & CEO, Vista Equity Partners

Sam L. Susser: Chairman of BancAffiliated, Inc.

Massey Villarreal: CEO and President, Precision Task Group, Inc.

Kirk Watson: Founding Dean of the University of Houston Hobby School of Public Affairs

Marc Watts: President, The Friedkin Group

Graham Weston: Former Chairman of Rackspace Hosting Inc.

Sanjiv Yajnik: President of the Financial Services Division, Capital One

For more information about the Governor's Strike Force to Open Texas, visit the strike force [webpage](#).