

Texas puts reopening on 'pause' as virus cases soar

25 June 2020, by Jim Vertuno and Paul J. Weber



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Gov. Greg Abbott on Thursday halted elective surgeries in Texas' biggest counties and said the state would "pause" its aggressive reopening as it deals with a surge in coronavirus cases and hospitalizations that has made it a virus hot spot.

The suspension of elective surgeries is designed to protect hospital space in the Dallas, Houston, Austin and San Antonio areas. Statewide, the number of COVID-19 patients has more than doubled in two weeks. Texas has reported more than 11,000 new cases in the previous two days alone.

The pause on reopening does not roll back previous orders that already allowed much of the economy to reopen. But it would appear to slow down any planned expansion of occupancy levels at places including bars, restaurants, amusement parks and other venues.

"We are focused on strategies that slow the spread of this virus while also allowing Texans to continue earning a paycheck to support their families," Abbott said in a statement. "The last thing we want

to do as a state is go backwards and close down businesses. This temporary pause will help our state corral the spread until we can safely enter the next phase of opening our state for business."

By reimposing a ban on elective surgeries, the Republican is returning to one of his first actions when the virus first emerged in Texas in March. He later rescinded the order during an aggressive reopening of the state in May that lifted lockdown orders ahead of most of the U.S.

Abbott this week has taken a newly urgent tone about the worsening trends and is now telling the public they should stay home. On Thursday, the number of hospitalizations climbed to nearly 4,400 patients, setting a new record for a 13th consecutive day.

Abbott has also urged Texans to wear masks in public. The governor hasn't issued a statewide mask order, but the state's cities and counties have imposed new orders on businesses to require customers and workers to wear face coverings.

© 2020 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

APA citation: Texas puts reopening on 'pause' as virus cases soar (2020, June 25) retrieved 5 May 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-06-texas-reopening-virus-cases-soar.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.