

November 19, 2020

Calling all leaders in our community:

Abilene is at a critical juncture, because what you do today affects what happens to our community and to our economy in two to four weeks. Hendrick has no open ICU beds in Abilene or Brownwood; there is no additional capacity. Hendrick has already started postponing “elective procedures,” including heart and brain surgeries, to preserve capacity for other critically ill patients. The unthinkable has happened, and we are on the trajectory to reach the level that will trigger a shutdown of our economy by the State within the next two weeks.

We are experiencing an exponential rise of COVID-19 cases in our community, which unfortunately means we’ll suffer more deaths of our friends, family and neighbors. Experience has shown that half of COVID-19 patients who are placed on a ventilator will die.

Today, 101 COVID-19 patients are hospitalized in Abilene. When 145 COVID-19 patients are hospitalized, it will trigger the State to roll back business occupancy levels, therefore crippling our economy. And, at the current rate of spread in our community, we’ll reach 145 hospitalized patients within 10 days, if we, as community leaders, do not take concrete action now.

To protect what we hold most dear—our children, our places of worship, our businesses—every one of you must do your part.

- **Enforce the mask mandate.**
 - Wear a mask over your nose and mouth when inside, and outdoors when you cannot maintain six feet of social distance.
 - Businesses: require that all employees and all patrons wear masks.
- **Cancel ALL non-essential events.** Cancel all gatherings of more than 10 people. These include:
 - Holiday parties, celebrations and events
 - Indoor sporting events
 - Outdoor sporting events where spectators cannot maintain social distancing
 - Concession stands
 - Indoor activities, especially those with singing including concerts, if masks are not mandatory.
- **Go virtual.**
 - Use technology to your advantage and go virtual for events and gatherings.

You have an important role to play. Be socially accountable.

With the holidays approaching, we need you to be socially accountable for your actions. What you do today affects our community two weeks from now. Think of this holiday season as a season of sacrifice. Cancel all non-essential events. We cannot wait until after Thanksgiving to react to the climbing numbers in our community. Your actions can help us get to 2021 safely. Then, there’s a light at the end of the tunnel with a vaccine that has proven efficacy. Hendrick is already registered as a vaccination provider and is making plans to lead the vaccination process for our community.

It’s time for leaders to stop saying what you cannot do. Now is the time for leaders to say what you WILL do. The hospital is not the frontline; YOU are the frontline. Help us #SaveALifeSaveOurEconomy.

Signed,



Brad Holland
President and CEO, Hendrick Health



F. Scott Dueser
Chairman, President, and CEO
First Financial Bankshares



Rob Wiley, MD
Chief Medical Officer, Hendrick Health



Stephen Lowry, MD
Chief of Staff, Hendrick Medical Staff



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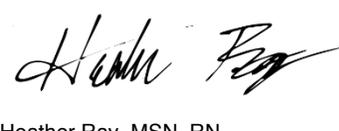
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