



## Hidalgo County Commissioners Court

**Richard F. Cortez**  
County Judge

**David L. Fuentes**  
Commissioner, Precinct 1

**Eduardo "Eddie" Cantu**  
Commissioner, Precinct 2

**Joe M. Flores**  
Commissioner, Precinct 3

**Ellie Torres**  
Commissioner, Precinct 4

### OFFICE OF COUNTY JUDGE RICHARD F. CORTEZ

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## NEWS ADVISORY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Monday, March 16, 2020

### **Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez advances Emergency Declarations**

**EDINBURG** – Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez issued a Disaster Declaration due to a Public Health Emergency after consulting with the leadership of all 22 municipalities within the county.

This Declaration will become effective Tuesday morning and will remain in effect for seven days. Judge Cortez will be asking the Hidalgo County Commissioners Court to extend this order an additional seven days until March 31.

“As part of this declaration, I am prohibiting mass gatherings of 50 or more in Hidalgo County,” said Cortez.

In addition, the county has been in constant contact over the last several weeks with local educational institutions and they have been amenable to recommendations from the county regarding the mitigation of the virus.

Businesses are also voluntarily changing their operations to stay in compliance with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to avoid having more than 50 people at a time congregate in their facilities.

“This is not an easy decision,” said Cortez. “I recognize the hardships that this declaration may have on many of our citizens. I make this move for the greater good of the county.”

In conferring with city leaders in Hidalgo County, a consensus was reached that a necessary step to mitigate what the county believes is the inevitable – that someone in Hidalgo County will test positive for COVID-19.

Judge Cortez expressed the appreciation of the level of support all city leadership displayed. Each of the 22 municipalities will be issuing similar declarations in their respective jurisdictions, Cortez said.

“Residents of Hidalgo County should take comfort in knowing that the county is acting decisively for the public good,” said Cortez. “There still has been no known cases of COVID-19 in Hidalgo County. As testing begins to ramp up locally, the county fully expects to have someone diagnosed with the virus. We will be ready.”

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*Hidalgo County is home to one of the fastest growing regions in the nation. We provide health and justice to the over 800,000 residents of our county. We strive to be accessible and responsive to our citizens by providing excellent public service through the values of leadership, transparency, fairness, collaboration, respect and fiscal responsibility. Follow our social media feed at [www.co.hidalgo.tx.us/followus](http://www.co.hidalgo.tx.us/followus)*