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**NEWS
RELEASE**

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COVID-19 UPDATE

City Reports Largest Spike to Date

EL PASO, Texas—Today the City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH) reports **one (1)** additional COVID-19 death and **233** new COVID-19 cases, the largest spike the community has seen to date.

The death is a male in his 50s with underlying health conditions; bringing the total number of deaths to **126**. The cumulative number of positive cases now stands at **5,217**, of which **3,550** have recovered. There are **1,541** active cases.

“We continue to be saddened by the ongoing loss of lives, and send our deepest condolences to this gentleman’s family,” said City-County Local Health Authority Dr. Hector Ocaranza. “We are also alarmed by the spike in new cases seen over the last several days. We are still investigating these spikes to get a more comprehensive understanding of the source of exposure. Initial reports indicate there are at least three clusters in the latest spike.”

Health officials said the three clusters appear to be in an elderly care facility, a detention facility and a healthcare facility; and are working to provide the public more details about these clusters in the coming days.

The epidemiology team conducts investigations, including contact tracing, to determine an individuals’ condition and immediate needs, to provide isolation orders and guidance, and to identify those potentially exposed contacts and the need for quarantine and/or testing. Contact tracing is conducted as an effort to determine possible spread of infection and implement measures to stop the spread of COVID-19. The investigation can lead to identifying clusters of people who might be infected within the same location.

“The faster the infected individuals are identified and isolated, the better chance we have to reduce and control the spread,” Ocaranza said. “However, we need the public’s cooperation to do their part, heed our warnings and help reduce the risk of infection that might lead to more deaths and families left without a loved one.”

The other significant concern is an increasing number of positive cases within 20 and 30 year olds. Early reports suggest that these two age groups appear to have contracted the virus while out in public and not taking the proper safety precautions to include practicing social distancing, frequent hand washing with soap and water and wearing a face covering.

The public is once again reminded that even infected persons with little to no symptoms can spread the virus to others; everyone must hold himself or herself accountable and work to protect each other. For more information, visit www.epstrong.org.

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