

“Denton Approves of Grant for Covid-19 Testing”

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The Denton County Commissioners Court held a public meeting on April 14 via Zoom, in which they unanimously approved the Revenue to Public Health Preparedness Grant. This grant will use a total of \$573,124 during the fiscal year of 2020 - 2021 to increase revenue and allocate expenditures for public health during the COVID-19 crisis.

The money for this grant came from the Federal Government. It was revenue that was authorized by Congress and then allocated to Texas, and from there was allocated to Denton County based on population.

“[The money will be used] to assist and support Denton county Covid-19 activities such as surveillance, laboratory testing, and reporting,” said Denton County Judge Andy Eads.

\$389,223 will be granted towards administrative supplies. This section of the Revenue to Public Health Preparedness Grant will mostly be used for testing fees by private laboratories, as well as obtaining supplies that will prepare samples for testing.

Another section of the Revenue to Public Health Preparedness Grant will be dedicated to contract labor and will be using \$172,901. This money will be used to help expand the testing clinics in Denton County.

“We’re anticipating testing clinics, and if we happen to have a vaccine in the foreseeable future those could be converted to immunization clinics,” said Court Commissioner Matt Richardson.

The remaining amount from the Revenue to Public Health Preparedness Grant, \$11,000, will be used for capital equipment.

Later in the meeting, Richardson discusses important statistics about COVID-19, stressing the seriousness of it. He stated that according to an article he saw, it is estimated that 2020's influenza season will kill about 24,000 people in over five months, while COVID-19 will have killed the same amount of people in just five weeks.

In Denton County, there have been 507 cases of COVID-19 and 13 total deaths. These statistics are updated daily and can be found on the Denton County website under COVID-19 Stats.

In the meeting, Judge Eads mentioned that according to the Texas Department of State Health Services, Denton county is ranked number two when it comes to COVID-19 testing per capita in Texas, right behind Travis County. Denton county has reported that there has been a total of 3,207 tests for COVID-19, and 880 of those tests were conducted by Denton County's public health professionals.

Though this information was mentioned by Judge Eads as something to be proud of, Richardson noted that there still needs to be an increase of testings available. While Denton County ranks number two when it comes to testing, Eads points out that there is an average of 376 tests per 100,000 residents, which still isn't enough.

"I think some of us have been frustrated with the lack of testing for the people who definitely want it," said Richardson.

He stated that Denton County has been “scouring” health care supply providers for more testing swabs, as well as partnering with different organizations to manufacture and place large orders for the viral transfer media.

“We’re attempting to expand testing with every means necessary,” said Richardson.