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Governor is Right to Call for Gradual, Science-Based Approach to Reopen Texas Economy

In response to Gov. Greg Abbott’s remarks regarding plans to reopen the Texas economy, John Carlo, MD, chair of the Texas Public Health Coalition, issued the following statement:

“The Texas Public Health Coalition stands by Governor Abbott in calling for a gradual approach to reopening the Texas economy based on public health and the latest science. While early indications are that Texas may be flattening the curve, community transmission of COVID-19 is still occurring, and the ultimate course the virus will run in Texas is far from certain.

“It is important to remember very few of Texas’ 29 million residents have immunity to COVID-19, and most remain susceptible to infection. Resuming economic activity too quickly could reestablish conditions that ignite rapid viral spread. A second wave of infections could again threaten to overwhelm health care resources and reinterrupt business activity at great cost to the state and its citizens.

“Returning to business as usual is everyone’s preference. However, for Texans to return to work and school safely, certain conditions must be met. These include immediate scaling up of COVID-19 testing so that all cases in Texas can be quickly identified, enhancing local public health capacity for contact tracing, providing adequate personal protective equipment for health care workers in all practice settings, and documenting continued declines in new cases so that hospitals do not become overwhelmed.

“By following public health recommendations so far, state and local elected officials have already saved lives. Any decisions to relax current restrictions and reopen the economy should continue to be guided by sound public health science and made with the state’s top public health experts at the table.

“The Texas Public Health Coalition stands ready to assist Governor Abbott and his administration in preparing safe plans to reopen the Texas economy.”

John Carlo, MD
Chair, Texas Public Health Coalition