

Texas becomes 4th state to surpass 10,000 virus deaths

18 August 2020, by Paul J. Weber



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Texas surpassed 10,000 confirmed coronavirus deaths Monday as the lingering toll of a massive summer outbreak continues, and health experts expressed concerns that recent encouraging trends could be fragile as schools begin reopening for 5 million students across the state.

Roughly four in every five of those deaths were reported after June 1. Texas embarked on one of the fastest reopenings in the country in May before an ensuing surge in cases led Republican Gov. Greg Abbott to backtrack and impose a statewide mask order. August has seen an improving outlook, although Texas officials are now concerned that not enough people are seeking tests.

The Texas Department of State Health Services reported 51 new deaths Monday, along with more than 2,700 new cases. Numbers are typically lower on Monday due to reporting lags over the weekends.

Texas joins New York, New Jersey and California as the other states to surpass 10,000 [coronavirus](#)

deaths. Florida is also approaching the grim milestone.

Hundreds of new deaths have been reported daily in Texas over recent weeks, dampening otherwise positive signs that include hospitalizations falling off by the thousands since July and the rate of positive cases on the decline. Many of the most recent deaths reported actually occurred weeks ago since Texas doesn't add them to the state's tally until [death certificates](#) are filed.

Abbott is now urging Texans not to grow complacent as the numbers improve and schools and universities reopen. Already elsewhere in the U.S., new virus clusters have sprung up at the start of the fall semester, some of them linked to off-campus parties and packed clubs.

School is underway for some Texas students although some districts have pushed back the first day of class until September. And even when school does return, Texas is giving schools the option of offering virtual instruction into November. But some teachers say Texas is still rushing back to class too quickly.

On Sunday night, the Texas Supreme Court allowed one of the state's largest school districts, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD near Houston, to mandate that teachers return to campus for professional development before the [school](#) year begins. A local chapter of the American Federation of Teachers, one of the largest [teacher](#) groups in the nation, had filed a lawsuit claiming it remained unsafe for teachers to return.

The virus nationwide has been blamed for over 170,000 deaths and 5.4 million confirmed infections.

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