

# City Council Special Called Meeting Transcript (Joint Meeting with Travis County Commissioners Court) – 10/26/2021

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[9:09:09 AM]

>> Judge Brown: We are joined by commissioner Shea, Travillion, commissioner gómez remotely and commissioner Howard. And we'll go ahead and call the meeting to order and I'll pass it over to the mayor to do the same.

>> Mayor Adler: Judge, and commissioners court, again, thank you for letting us participate with you. And I am going to call to order the joint meeting of the Austin city council here on October 26, 2021. And the time is 9:08. And we may be just shy of a quorum since we're not taking votes yet at this point, taking any action, we're ready to proceed.

>> Judge Brown: Thank you, mayor. So and we're supposed to call things to order, but I'm to say that I'm calling the joint meeting of the Travis county commissioners court and the Austin city council to order. And we're definitely called to order by now. We'll take up item 1 to receive

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briefings on covid-19-related matters and I turn it over to Dr. Walkes and Austin public health.

>> Thank you, judge. Good morning to everyone in the court and city council. If I could see the first slide, please.

>> Mayor Adler: By the way, judge, we have a quorum now.

>> Judge Brown: Thank you.

>> I'll go ahead and share my screen. Does someone have the slides available, or should I go ahead and share my screen?

>> I have a presentation but I was under the impression that I was just hosting for the mayor and chambers. I'm happy to do that if someone

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can hand off the presentation to me.

>> Okay.

>> There's no privileges and you just have to be in the meeting to share them.

>> Okay. I can do that. Can you see my screen?

>> Mayor Adler: Yes.

>> Okay, good. Sorry, I wasn't prepared to do this, and I'm having some difficulty getting this open.

>> Dr. Walkes, this is chuck

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Brotherton and I'm happy to share my screen and show your slides if that works for you.

>> That would be great, thank you. Because I'm pushing the wrong button. Let me take that down. Stop sharing. Thank you.

>> You're welcome.

>> You can go to the next slide, please. First of all I'd like to thank the aph team, all of our area health care providers and this community for working so hard to reduce our numbers. We currently have 269 cases that have been reported to aph as of yesterday. And the positivity rate is down to 4.6% and our seven-day moving average for hospitalizations is at 15. We had 145 patients in hospital, 65 in icu, 43 on ventilators, 11

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admissions and 10 discharges. And this is all due to the efforts of this community and all of the participants in this response. In our first surge when we had no vaccine available, we used social distancing and masking and other non-pharmaceutical measures to bring our numbers down. Second surge, same thing, only we had the additional benefit of vaccines that were given to the community. With this latest surge we see a combination of our non-pharmaceutical measures that have helped to curb the spread as well as vaccines and the use of monoclonal antibody therapy. With the emergence of new variants of this virus in our second surge with the U.K. Variant and in this last surge with the delta variant, we see

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that our vaccines have held up and prevented hospitalizations and death in those who were vaccinated and we are continuing to promote masking, social distancing, and vaccinations in our community. Can you move to the next slide, please. Our aph epidemiology team is monitoring the situation in the U.K. And Europe. And if you look at the two slides on the left-

hand side of the screen you're seeing the surge in cases that's occurring across the ocean. They have postulated that these increased number of cases are

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happening because of decreased masking and waning immunity and the decrease in the numbers of those who are not receiving their primary vaccine series. Next slide, please. The U.T. Modeling group has been working with aph to all along the way to help inform our risk-based guidance measures that we have been using. And the modeling shows that in the top two figures that if we continue with the threshold for stage 2 of five, that we may see two surges in the november-december time frame. And it's postulated that may be because of the decreased measures of masking and social distancing. If you look on the -- at the

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picture that's depicted on this slide, it is a slide, a picture showing what is happening in Europe and the U.K. At this point and the headline is saying that what's driving the rise in the U.K. Covid cases is thought to be the relaxation of masking and also people not going to get their booster jabs. As we know we've just received full authorization for emergency authorization for boosters for Johnson and modern and now boosters recommended for all three of the covid-19 vaccines. So it is important for our community to continue to get their primary series of vaccines if they've not been vaccinated, and to go and get their booster vaccines to boost the immunity that they have to covid-19 and prevent severe illness and

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hospitalizations. Next slide, please. Another fact that is important to help us protect our hospital systems, which is what we've all been trying to do throughout this pandemic is to look at what the impact of flu and influenza season will be on our hospital systems. This slide depicts what's happening in Travis county. For the previous season of 2021 when we were masking and social distancing consistently, you see that our flu numbers were very low. We started to receive those reports of some minor numbers of flu cases, but it's important that we as a community go out and get our flu shots and do those same measures that we've been doing to prevent developing

[9:18:18 AM]

covid-19, which is wearing masks and social distancing, staying home when sick, and preventing and protecting illness in ourselves and our family. The next slide, please. This slide is showing us the breakdown of the number of cases in Travis county hospitals. And at this point 59.89% of patients admitted to hospital for covid-19 are from Travis county. And the remainder of the counties and our surrounding area contribute to the remaining admissions for covid-19. Almost all of those admitted to the hospital are unvaccinated. And in this slide on the right-hand side of

it you will see our vaccine numbers of those vaccination status that are reported on patients for our hospital systems. And the next slide, please.

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If we look at the breakdown of the race, ethnicity and sex of those that are contracting covid-19 in our county, there is a disproportionately large number of hispanic individuals and blacks that have been contracting covid-19, an ongoing problem that we're addressing with continued efforts and outreach into those communities. Next slide, please. What we've seen with the lifting or relaxation of masking is that children do indeed contract covid-19 and do develop illness at times that requires hospitalization. And since the 27th of September,

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through the 24th of October, there have been 40 admissions to the hospital of patients under the age of 18. 10 have required icu care. None have been vaccinated. If we look at the age distribution that's been seen in the past four weeks, we see that there still remains a higher percentage of younger individuals admitted to hospital. The 20-49 year age range is now more represented in this delta surge than in previous surges. You can go to the next slide, please. When we look at our school systems with masking, being inconsistent in a lot of our school settings, we're seeing more spread within the classrooms followed by spread in

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athletic after-school activities and in school transportation scenarios. We applaud those school districts that require masks and they've been able to help reduce the spread of covid-19. And in this last week we have had reported to us 181 cases, 158 of those in students, and the remainder in staff and employees. Next slide, please. Our long-term care facilities are a testament to how effective vaccinations are in that age group and in our community as a whole. We have seen a continued decline in the number of cases. Those cases that have been seen in this last 14-day period were in five vaccinated -- fully vaccinated individuals. None of the cases that have been

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reported to aph required hospitalization. Next slide, please. When we look at reinfections, we are assessing whether after full recovery from covid-19, 90 days after recovery from covid-19, there is a subsequent reinfection. And during the period of the delta surge we saw an increase in the numbers of cases of reinfections, which is coinciding with the information that we know now that antibodies that are produced can have protection from reinfection for a 90-day period, after which time it is recommended that those who have had covid-19 go and get their vaccination

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series. Next slide, please. We look at breakthrough cases, of the 119,220 cases that have been reported of confirmed covid-19 to aph, we've had 8,700 confirmed breakthrough cases. 90 of those patients of the 8,700 required hospitalization. 45 of those were male and 45 female. We've had 45 covid associated deaths since vaccines were available in December -- late December of 2020. And that again is a testament to the protective effects of vaccination to covid-19. And it stresses the need for our

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community to get their vaccinations and for those who are eligible either two months after their initial Johnson series or six months after the mrna or the pfizer or modern series, those boosters are important to protect them from severe disease, death and illness. This is a look at a huge number of patients that are collected in the system called the cosmo system. It is 120 million patients from 700 hospitals and 10,000 clinics across 50 of our United States. And these entities are health care facilities that are using a system called epic. Of the 17 million patients that

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received full vaccination coverage, they report 151,570 breakthrough cases. Particularly I wanted to point out that the number of breakthrough cases that occurred during the months of July and August during the delta surge were as shown there, 17,058 -- to 59,000 in August. If we look at the numbers for hospitalizations, infections and deaths for each of the vaccines that are available in our country for protection against covid-19, we see the numbers listed there. And each of our vaccines are effective at providing protection against severe disease, infection and

[9:26:32 AM]

hospitalizations and death. With the lowest protection rates being seen with the j&j but, nonetheless, they are all protecting against infection, hospitalization and death. And this is a slide looking at what our aph epidemiology team has been monitoring throughout the pandemic, but particularly during the year, this year when we've been able to give vaccines to our community. And we have had 7.8% of breakthrough cases that resulted in death. I want to take a minute to point out that Texas and Travis county have experienced three covid-19 surges during June of 2020, through August 2020. November 2020, through February 2021. And then July 2021 through

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October 2021. And in each of those successive surges we've had approximately 228 to 267 deaths occur. It's going to be extremely important for us to, one, prevent another surge by continuing what we know works -- wearing masks, social distancing, staying home when sick. If you are feeling sick, get tested. Identify if you have covid-19, stay home, protect yourself and

your family and your colleagues and co-workers from spreading that to them. And if you are eligible for booster, get booster shots to improve your immune status. There's been a lot of question about our business community and

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our events, and I would like to share this slide because it shows that our food and bar establishments have been practicing the social distancing measures that we've asked them to, and those that practice masking have less covid cases. We have had several large events in our community. Acl two weekends that have went well. Our epidemiology team reports that we've had less than 40 cases of individuals who reported that they attended acl, as well as non-festival venues. And they continue to monitor cases throughout our community to identify the impact of these events on our communities. What I'm concerned about and

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what I leave you with is that we're coming on the holiday season and a lot of our transmission has occurred in small intimate settings of families gathering for events and festivities. And as we go into our season of Halloween and Thanksgiving and all of the kwanzaa and yom kippur and all of the things that we celebrate traditionally, it is important that we plan and prepare to protect ourselves and our families -- mask and social distance in crowds when you're out gathering gifts and provisions for your festivals and your dinner parties. Make sure that if you have any sniffles that you identify whether it's really just allergies. Get tested. If you're not vaccinated, plan

[9:30:38 AM]

to do so now so that you'll be fully vaccinated when those occasions come about. And if you are eligible for a booster, please, go and get your booster shot. We have an opportunity to enjoy and relax during these next few months, and I hope that we'll take the opportunity to do what we've done so well this time. Let's maintain this level of calm. Let's give our hospital staff and our clinic staff and our aph staff a break. Let's be able to celebrate the season together safely and in a healthy way. Thank you.

>> Judge Brown: Thank you, Dr. Walkes. Director Sturup.

>> Yes, good morning, everyone.

[9:31:40 AM]

Just going to share my screen here. Hopefully I'm sharing. All right. So thank you Dr. Walkes for that update. I'm going to share an update on some of our operational activities. And so for the month of October in review, though we have a few days left, you can see here that we've given out 1,978 covid vaccines in total from the first through the 24th of the month. And this slide just shows the breakdown of which vaccine and what type of dose we've given out. We still continue to do some testing. Our St. John's site is the most

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popular place for folks to come and to receive a covid test with just a little over 2,200 shots administered there and 59 through mobile testing and 924 at our dove spring site. As you are making your plans to enjoy our holiday season, testing is an important part of that. We continue to provide testing options at the dove springs rec, St. John's, in-home testing is available by calling 311, and we continue to offer facility testing. And we can also provide mobile testing and that's where our team will come out to you and give you a covid-19 test. And you can schedule that by calling 512-972-5560. And when we look at our progress with vaccinations, week over week, Travis county is 72.5% fully vaccinated for those who are 12 and older.

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As of the 25th of this month. A total of 1,652,870 vaccines were administered in Travis county. While we're tracking folks being fully vaccinated we know that it is important to have an awareness of those who have not received their second dose. We continue to make incremental changes with this number. The last time I spoke to you it was 110,000 residents who had not received their second dose, and that number has gone down to 105,000. So this is the data for Travis county broken out by race and ethnicity. And this is according to the Texas department of state health services website.

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And the important thing on this slide for me is that as we continue to monitor the equity gap is that we're seeing a flattening in the black or African-American population with being only at 36%. The hispanic or Latino population is at 50%. As we move into boosters, we still are going to have an intentional emphasis on making sure that we get the community fully vaccinated. And so efforts focusing on those populations will be key. There is concern of the data on the part of our epi team because of the large percentage of individuals that choose "Other," and there is an intuition that there's a misrepresentation of the hispanic and black populations if folks choose

[9:35:46 AM]

"Other" instead of that category. And so we are -- oop -- we are continuing to try to dig down into that data to really get a clear picture of what is going on in those communities.  
>> Adrienne, your voice dropped off when you were saying that last piece about "Other," could you repeat that.  
>> I sure can, thank you, commissioner Howard. We believe that there may be some underrepresentation, particularly in the hispanic and Latino rates because of the high percentage of folks who are choosing "Other." And that doesn't match up with the census population of folks who had initially identified as "Other." So we're thinking when folks are

registering, there's some hesitancy for whatever reason to identify their race and ethnicity clearly, so they're choosing "Other." But our team is digging more down into that data so that we can have a greater picture of what our disparities gaps are.

[9:36:47 AM]

I think that this next slide, the maps help to give us a better picture of where those gaps might be. For our first dose fully vaccinated -- I love all of this screen -- it's great. Of course, we still have that one spot in the middle and we know that data collection issue because of students that may have received their vaccinations in another place or state. And so we can see zip code wise, in areas that we have higher concentrations of hispanic or black populations that we're looking pretty good from this point -- of first dose, I beg your pardon. This is a first dose map. When we look at the second dose or fully population map, so this is where we still see the gaps, 617 is still below or at the 50% mark. And the team tells me this might

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have something to do with counties outside of Travis that are in that area code. I think that the updates for this week is that 52 turned blue over the 60% mark and then we had two zip codes moving from blue to green and they were 58 and 24 of being 70% fully vaccinated. So the progress is happening. Hats off to, of course, the aph teams doing that good work in community, and of course, the work of the constable and the county collaborative. And so again for those who are watching, if you are planning for your holiday season, we know that testing is one way to prepare but we also know that vaccines are the best way to go. So if you want that first-class experience, we invite you to come out and to get vaccinated at these locations. This week we'll be at our standard locations and our static locations, southeast branch library, little walnut creek and the pflugerville

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library. And also at the Delco activity center and at Simms elementary. The again, client does not need I.D. We are providing booster shots of any formulation at any of these locations, but you do need to have your vaccine card because it makes it easier for the staff to look up which vaccine you received and to know which dose you are eligible for. In addition to these static sites we'll be at over 13 events this week, including the Corine festival center and at the arch, the Austin resource center for the homeless. So booster and pediatric emergency use authorization status. The fda provided eua and CDC advisory panel on immunization practices, recommendations to approve adding modern and j&j

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boosters. And so we have integrated the updated booster clinical guidelines through all of our practices. Again, you know, you can come to any of our locations and get a booster. So for pfizer and modern, boosters are recommended for the



following groups: Six months or more after their initial series. So six months after you received that second shot, if you are 18 and older and live in a long-term care setting or 18 and older and have underlying medical conditions, or 18 and older and work or live in high-risk settings, a booster shot is for you. And so if you received a j&j vaccine, the new recommendation is two months after that first dose, if you fall into any of the categories that I mentioned before, a booster shot is for you or anyone who received j&j at all. So j&j is open.

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A j&j booster is available for anyone who received j&j as their initial covid vaccine. And now you can mix and match for booster shots. So it's a lot of information to process and our team is ready. You can either call our equity line at 311, or when you walk up for your appointment you can have the conversation with the patient reps on hand and they'll help you to figure out if a booster shot is for you. And the thing that we're all waiting for, the meeting is today for the fda to consider the clinical trial data submitted by pfizer for vaccines for kids 5 to 11. We said, you know, in presentations before as soon as that approval happens the acip committee will meet, the advisory committee on immunization practices, and they'll issue those guidelines and then we'll be able to

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incorporate those guidelines into our clinical practices and begin providing shots to our kids. And so our proactive approach for planning for covid-19 vaccines, we will be a provider. We will begin by having vaccines at four established locations and that will be Delco, Simms elementary, shots for tot everyone is St. John's and shots for tots far south. We won't have any pop-up locations in this first week due to the uncertainty of vaccine delivery. Once we get into the flow and we're getting regular deliveries and we imagine that will be the following week of the 15th, we will continue with our four static sites and at school pop-up clinics in areas that have limited access points. And so we're currently working with manor ISD and charter

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schools in 78724, 78617, 78744, and 78752. In addition to being a provider, we plan to add -- to provide, rather, technical support to the broader private community and that is from transferring small amounts of vaccines, to helping providers figure out billing and reimbursement practices. We're currently having a convening of providers at the end of this week to assess community capacity and identify any needs and gaps and make sure that providers are aware of the assistance that Austin public health can provide. We're also as of last week we distributed a survey to assess vaccine location and provider preferences, and to identify any

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hesitancies that parents might have about their kiddos getting vaccines. And I want to point out that the staff are very intentional about the picture that they chose for this slide. And you can see that mom is holding her daughter while a shot is being administered. And that's just a reminder that this is going to be a very different operation from adult vaccines. There are a lot of things that we have to take into consideration, and one of which is if a child needs to be held or comforted during the administration of a shot, that has to be a parent. So we're really working closely with our clinical partners on the ground at schools to figure out what will be the best process to push into schools. And really working to create safe spaces and places for kids to get vaccines. It's not a one and done. They have to come back and get another shot. And this experience can very well tarnish their approach

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about the doctor or shots or anything like that. So we're really taking great care to make sure that we not only have the right staff, we have the right environment, we have the right process. And we have the right prizes to reward those kiddos for being brave and getting that shot. Last night we held the first of a community engagement session to invite the community to really give some candid commentary on their experience receiving vaccines. Hats off to cassie Deleon, our chief administrative officer for disease and health promotion and her team for putting this event together, as well as the joint information system, and cpio. We really worked hard to make sure that there was inclusivity with respect to language. I believe we had over five

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languages or offered interpretation in five languages as well as offering asl interpretation. So there was a general session where we were all together and then there were breakout rooms by language so people could feel comfortable in sharing their experience in their language of choice. And so in this first night -- I think that it is pretty good for a Monday night, we had 70 participants. Round two will happen this Saturday early morning. And so we will continue to get that feedback from community, not only to inform the booster rollout, but to make sure that we are addressing any technical or language or geographic barriers that people are still feeling to make sure that we can get our community fully vaccinated. And this is just a slide to show

[9:47:00 AM]

our outreach efforts for the week. On the 25th, we held our chw career fair, very important because we're going to need those boots-on-the-ground teams to give good information, especially now with all of the difference -- do I need a half dose, a full dose or j&j. So we really need to make sure that we have teams that are ready and connected to communities and armed with materials to make sure that we're providing good information and spaces and places where people live, work and play. We had 26 people show up at that event, and seven of them were potential hires and three of them are already in the process of being hired. At Gus Garcia we served 475 families with ppe and hand sanitizer. We also gave out 125 resource packets which included shelf

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stable food bags and information about immunizations, resources for food and rent and utility support. We also gave out some children's books and cookbooks. And that makes me smile because in the midst of this pandemic we are aware that there are some serious impacts on families as a whole, whether through loss of income and families are struggling to make ends meet with kids having a year of virtual learning. And that loss of learning and that gap that's growing wider for our kids in black and brown communities, so you might think why are books important when we're talking about covid-19. We're talking about our community recovering as a whole and building resiliency. So supporting families with their basic needs and our kiddos with their learning is really important. And so hats off to the staff for really taking that full-fledged approach to -- full-fledged

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approach to serve communities. Over the last week, we had our blue the flu event, where we not only gave flu shots but we also administered some covid-19 vaccines. We were also in 78704 at the Travis park apartments, the life work offices and rainbow house. And 21 at the double rr, I don't know where that is, but we were there. And in 23 at the poco loco and the kensington village and the Springdale shopping center. In the 41, at the foundation and communities harbor terrace, and city view at the park apartments, today's style and the easy pawnshop. And 52, we were at the lone star family market around the St. John's neighborhood. And in 17, we were at the Chevron gas station up in del valle and a manor we were at the ronalds Mexican restaurant and at the Wal-Mart. So as we grow our

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boots-on-the-ground teams we are intentional about being in neighborhoods and in communities where we are seeing those gaps. This is a photo of the event that we held at the dove springs rec where 417 families were served with ppe, the same resource bags, and children's books again. And that is the end of my report. And this is a team out at the east Austin neighborhood center doing that drive-thru bag distribution. So I thank you all for your time today and I turn it back over to the judge.

>> Judge Brown: Thanks, director Sturup. Chuck, are you on? There you are. Chuck Brotherton.

>> Judge, I am here, good morning. Judge and mayor councilmembers and commissioners I'm chuck Brotherton for emergency services. I'm here this morning with constable George morales of Travis county precinct 4 to update y'all on our strike team, our vaccination strike team

[9:51:07 AM]

activities over the past week. You can see my screen. You can see the total doses for last week for our collaborative, 526. That was across approximately 30 separate strike team activities which makes an average of about 17 shots per event. I think for our pop-up events, the strike

team events in our supermarkets and other places, those were very good numbers. For our drive-thru effort at the Travis county expo which we do continue on Saturdays and Sundays, those numbers are beginning to drop off rather significantly. So we are -- we are continually assessing our ongoing efforts and working to make adjustments as we ramp up our plans for vaccinating pediatrics, children 5 through 11, and working with our school districts. It may be that we decide to reallocate some of our resources from the expo to those school

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pop-ups, but that's to be determined and we're going to continue looking at that as we move forward. Total number of vaccinations provided by the Travis county collaborative to date -- we began back in January. And so up until this past weekend we've got 11,331 shots delivered and our vaccinator of record was community care and they were with us at circuit of the Americas. They did about 74,000 doses. And now with Travis county esd11 and fire chief Ken Bailey as our current vaccinator of record, that vaccinator has documented about 37,500 shots. While as you have heard from director Sturup, as far as race goes the other category is a high number. When you look at ethnicity, however, you can see that the Travis county collaborative has

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delivered most of its shots, about 26,000 to hispanic or latinx patients. Moving on to the next slide, a rather busy slide, but I'll zoom in on portions of this. On this previous one you can see that our Travis county residents, 33,675 so far. The other category, people who live outside or report living outside Travis county, 3,800. You can see on these two maps in the upper corner of this graph that in Texas and elsewhere around the U.S. Those are the locations where those folks were non-travis county residents report living. So indicates just the number of visitors that we have and the folks that we're vaccinating. Over on the right-hand side of the upper page here you can see our vaccine distribution by zip code. And I can see the size of the

[9:54:12 AM]

box indicates the numbers, the larger numbers, of people vaccinated. So this is an illustration that we are continuing to vaccinate primarily people who live in our most underserved zip codes, 77824 is where the expo center happen to be, and 78653, all three of these are in our top underserved zip codes. So moving down on this page, again, vaccine over time in the last 30 days, you will see yellow are first doses, red, second doses and green are our boosters. The Travis county collaborative is a pfizer operation so the boosters that we are providing are pfizer boosters, third doses. As you heard director Sturup also say, we are able to mix among the mrna vaccines so that if you did receive a moderna first cycle, as I did --

[9:55:13 AM]

I got two modern shots initially -- you can follow that up with a pfizer booster as I also did. I went to a commercial pharmacy this week and they gave me a pfizer shot. And then over on

the right-hand side you can see again over time from March through this past weekend the numbers of first, second and third shots. On this last or third slide, strike team events by zip code, over on the left-hand side, again, we are serving primarily eastern crescent and you can see the numbers of shots, 77824 again, where expo is, 47 separate events over time. And then over on the right-hand side these numbers are for the past week and the zip codes that we have served and the number of shots in each of those zip codes. And at this time I will stop

[9:56:13 AM]

sharing and turn it over to constable George morales.

>> Good morning, commissioners, councilmembers, mayor and judge. We continue to focus our outreach on education doing the work to make sure our strike teams are successful. Our mobile vaccine collaborative teams gave a total, along with our additional partner of allied health of 601 shot this is past seven days. A total for the month of October is going to be 2,804 shots given. We had a total of 2,900 flyers and 720 phone calls. We continue to target a lot of the highly affected zip codes which are 77858, and 77841, and del valle, Austin, and 77824. And we currently are working at our school areas this week at Mendez middle school and key

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middle schools. Also folk Ising with working at del valle opportunity center and Daley middle school. This past week we did Travis high school and answered some good questions out there. We gave an impressive 32 shots at Austin F.C. We'll continue to work at the Mexican consulate and we did attend a pflugerville football game as requested by commissioner Travillion. Again, this week, again, we're focusing on our aisd schools and our high zip code population and our static locations at J.D. Super stores and poco locos and we want to press education because we don't want people to drop their guard coming into the winter months. I too took a flu shot about two weeks ago and just to prepare myself and my family that we don't take anything lightly and

[9:58:15 AM]

we keep our guard up. And I'll turn it back over to chuck.

>> And commissioners and councilmembers, I like to show our viewers how easy it is to find vaccination information. On the Travis county website, on the landing page, one click away for covid pop-up clinic vaccine events by day. And you can see this here, Tuesday October 26th, we've got information not just for the Travis county collaborative, also for Austin public health, Delco activity center, Austin resource center, walnut creek library, the jb stores where where we will be this evening, Williamson county and others are

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participating. As you go through the week, click on any one of those, and you can find out information, no appointment needed of course. On the city of Austin landing page, again, for

more information, one click, find coronavirus information and then one click here to find locations for free covid-19 vaccination. And then for retail vaccines, local pharmacies and so forth, vaccines.gov, which is available both in English and Spanish. All you need to do is to click on the location, type in the zip code, and I will type in 78617 instead of 25 miles, we'll see what's available within five miles of that zip code in terms of a retail pharmacy. And you can see again this underscores the importance for us to continue what we're doing, which is offering vaccines by

[10:00:18 AM]

local government. One retail pharmacy within five miles of this underserved zip code. And that's true across the eastern crescent, so, again, folks who are looking for vaccines, I would point them back to the Travis county web page, city of Austin web page to find where those shots might be available. Judge, at this time, I'll stop sharing and turn it back over to you and the mayor for questions.

>> Thanks, chuck, constable, and everybody. We'll start with questions from commissioners, then city council. Commissioner Gomez, do you have any questions?

>> Gomez: Yes. This is really great news. Can y'all hear me?

>> Yes.

>> Gomez: Great. This is really great news as this I'm hearing and it sounds very promising. I notice there's still hesitancy out there. And constable, if there's hesitancy among the adults, will

[10:01:20 AM]

there be hesitancy vaccinating their children?

>> One question was parents waiting for their children, their smaller children to get vaccinated and they would get vaccinated with them. No matter how hard we've pressed to try to say be an example, let them see you introduce they were still holding off. Those are some hesitations we're seeing. We're seeing a past history of vaccines within the United States. We're also seeing some inequities for healthcare and services provided in the eastern crescent. There's a trust issue. We're going to continue to beat down those walls and get the information that we need to get out there.

>> Gomez: And I also wonder, the role that schools could play in this by talking to elementary children about health issues, about healthy issues, about everything -- eating, exercising, etc., etc.,

[10:02:24 AM]

including vaccines. And in order to avoid some of the covid and flu and etc., etc., to stay healthy. So I wonder, are schools -- do we have health classes in elementary schools, starting in elementary? Because I think that's where it ought to start, because you'd be amazed how enthusiastic children can be. And they'll talk to their -- the adults about some of the things that they've learned in school, about everything. And they will tell you in very enthusiastic terms,

mom, you know, it's important that you do this or do that. And so do we have health classes in elementary schools, or junior high and high school?

>> So, commissioner, we have had

[10:03:25 AM]

this discussion with our aid schools and the information. It's like when you used to get pamphlets about smoking and tell your parents about smoking. Some of those issues that are out there, again, the mobile vaccine collaborative is three and four, support Austin public health and other shot locations. That is a great discussion and maybe I can refer to major Sturup on the education purposes on children in elementary schools.

>> Gomez: Great.

>> Judge Brown: Thank you. Commissioner Shea?

>> Shea: Thanks, judge. And my usual gratitude to all of our staff who have been diligently trying to keep the community safe and educate everyone about the importance of getting the vaccine, staying masked, social distance. I noticed on one of the charts it looked as though -- and I think someone said that we are expecting another potential

[10:04:26 AM]

surge in the november-december timeframe. I'm assuming because people will be inside and at family gatherings. What a guidance can we give people to try and prevent that surge from getting out of hand like the others have?

>> Thank you for asking that question. We need to plan to be safe, plan to get vaccinated if you're unvaccinated prior to going to visit grandma. And if you're sick, don't go and visit grandma. And if you need a booster or if anybody that is going to be going to visit friends and family, they should go and get that booster to make sure that they have full protection from vaccine.

>> Shea: And will we still be recommending that people mask or try and socially distance when they're with family members and indoors because the weather is

[10:05:27 AM]

cooler?

>> Indoor masking would be recommended if you're going to be in a situation where you're with a group of people who are not from your household, particularly if they're not vaccinated or if they have a medical condition that would put them at risk for covid-19. If you're not going to do that, I would recommend that people test before they go just to make sure they don't have asymptomatic illness.

>> Shea: Thank you.

>> Judge Brown: Thanks. Commissioner Travillion?

>> Travillion: Okay. Once again, I want to commend the team for the work that's been done. And I just want to ask a couple of questions. And one is going to be have we given you the

resources -- and I guess I'll direct this one to constable morales. Have we given you the resources that you need to address the pop-up clinics that you have

[10:06:29 AM]

been putting together? It seems like we're getting better results from the pop-ups than we're getting from the static sites. Do you have everything that you need? That's my question for constable morales. And my followup -- and this might be to Dr. Walkes -- is, what is the opinion about getting -- I've heard two or three different discussions. What is the opinion about taking a different vaccine for your booster than you took for your first and second shot? If I took modern twice, is there a benefit to taking pfizer for the booster, or should -- or is the greatest benefit coming from taking modern again?

>> The CDC has provided guidance

[10:07:29 AM]

to allow for mixing and matching. And you can certainly do that. And I would recommend that anyone who's going to have a booster, if they are considering changing from one product to the other, that they consult with their physician to make sure that the change that they're considering making would be advisable for them and their particular medical conditions.

>> Travillion: Thank you. Constable morales, do you have what you need or should we be looking for additional things?

>> So, on the medical side I think we're keeping up as best as we can. We do tend to run thin sometimes and try to maneuver and try to fill areas, but we're doing great on that a side right now. On my side the, the outreach, we're still trying to keep up. We are very thin and trying to

[10:08:31 AM]

keep up with shot locations and additional staffing shortages that are current, not with my office, but around Travis county. So we're going to do our best as we can. Yes, there are some difficulties along the way, but we keep up. So it's a 50/ 50 question. Additional resources are needed but we're going to keep up as best as possible.

>> Travillion: I just want you to be able -- we can have this discussion offline -- to enumerate some of the things that are necessary so we can go about making sure that you have what you need to get the maximum number of people.

>> Thank you, commissioner.

>> Judge Brown: Thank you. Commissioner Howard.

>> Howard: Thank you very much. I wanted to know from Adrienne when the provider meeting is, and if that is something that I could make sure that the jurisdictions in western Travis county are aware of as you gear

[10:09:32 AM]

up to offer technical assistance and information around pediatric vaccinations.



>> So, it is scheduled for this November 5th. I was going to say this Friday, but Halloween hasn't happened yet, so it's scheduled for November 5th. Dr. Walkes can speak more about the invitee list. It is limited to clinical providers because we really want to get that input. But if you have physicians that should be invited, please let us know. We've talked to I.T. And we've got the webex set up so we can host a huge crowd. So the more the merrier in terms of getting that information and feedback.

>> Howard: Okay.

>> And -- thank you. I wanted to go back to commissioner Gomez's question about the education in schools. That's something that we can talk to the individual districts about. There is a process where there's

[10:10:33 AM]

a committee that would have to review any materials or information and then it would be -- it would have to get that approval. But let me talk to staff to see if that's something that's feasible in terms of operations and then have some initial conversations with those aid, probably manor and del valle to see what the process would be and if they would be open to it. Unfortunately, the covid vaccine brings so much more to it than a health discussion. And we would want to tread lightly. But definitely food for thought and we'll take that back to the team.

>> Gomez: I just don't want to overlook young people and just assume that they don't know what's going on. They're smart.

>> Judge Brown: Thanks. My question -- on the testing, Dr. Walkes or director Sturup, do people have to be symptom symptomatic

[10:11:37 AM]

to get a test, or can they go to a free testing site or buy a test at a pharmacy? Just to check out if they're positive before they go have Thanksgiving dinner or things like that?

>> Yes, they can pick up a home test in a local pharmacy, or go to their provider, or go to one of the testing locations that we have.

>> Judge Brown: Okay. So it's not a requirement that you are -- have a runny nose or some symptom of potential covid to get a test, right?

>> No. And when I mention that in particular I'm thinking about people that may have been in work situations where they were unmasked and they're not sure if they were exposed, or in a crowded situation where they were possibly exposed so that they can limit that risk by checking a test.

>> Judge Brown: Awesome. Thank you. Mayor, I'll pass it on over to you all.

>> Mayor Adler: Judge, thank you. We're going to begin with

[10:12:39 AM]

district 1 and then work our way up. So we'll begin with the mayor pro tem.

>> Harper-madison: Thank you, mayor, I appreciate it. Thank you, judge, commissioners, my colleagues at the council. I actually don't have any questions. I want to express my deep

gratitude for the continued efforts around getting our community vaccinated, tested, keeping our community informed. I continue to hear really positive experiences and outcomes from our constituents when it comes to them finding the resources that they need. I actually personally had to help somebody find some resources recently and I want very impressed to say that it was a painless and easy to navigate experience, even for a person like me who's not entirely technologically savvy. So, good job, everybody, on our continued efforts and more of a statement than a question though, in that I have found that talking to folks in a way that we are maximizing our

[10:13:39 AM]

efforts and limited resources by applying those to people who are interested in being a part of the collective effort to move us forward in this continued fight against covid-19 has proven to be the better use of resources. It's not to say give up on anybody. We keep pushing and encouraging people to participate. But I want to say personally in my office and our efforts, we have been doubling down on people who are interested in moving forward together as a community to keep ourselves and families safe. That's all. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Mayor pro tem, thank you. I don't think councilmember Fuentes is with us this morning. Councilmember Renteria.

>> Renteria: I just want to say thanks to all of y'all for the outstanding work that y'all do. And when y'all were having that discussion about others, I kind

[10:14:40 AM]

of chuckle a little bit because all my grandkids are others. You know. If they're half black or half white, you know. So whatever they would want to be, you know. I have some that have three races. White, Mexican, Latino, whatever, and black. It's not hard for them. That's what they identify as. Thank y'all for bringing that up.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Is councilmember Casar with us? Councilmember kitchen is not. Councilmember Kelly?

>> Kelly: Hi. I don't have any questions at this time, but thank you so much for all of the information that was provided. It was very, very helpful.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Councilmember pool.

[10:15:41 AM]

I don't know if she's with us. Councilmember Ellis.

>> Ellis: Mayor, I certainly do appreciate all the work that's not only going into these initiatives but the presentations to help us understand these moving parts. I did have a question about underlying conditions. The presentation links to the CDC website but I was surprised to see how many different types of conditions might qualify. Could you go into a little more detail about maybe some of the things that people wouldn't expect would be an underlying condition that actually are?

>> We look at hypertension, diabetes, we could be talking about people with arthritis on particular medications, auto-immune conditions like chron's disease. So the list is long and

[10:16:43 AM]

comprehensive. The on the really is for us to make sure that we let people know that the booster is gong to help shore up their immunity and make sure that they have the full protection that they can get from being vaccinated. Great question.

>> Ellis: I was surprised to see individuals with HIV qualify as underlying condition, people on a schizophrenic spectrum. It's really important for folks to look up that CDC website and look at all those conditions -- heart and lung issues that can qualify and drive home the point that it's okay if you have these conditions to go ahead and sign up and get your booster, because there are quite a few conditions that qualify people.

>> Yes, thank you.

>> Ellis: Thanks for all your hard work.

>> Mayor Adler: Councilmember tovo.

>> Tovo: Thanks very much, all of you, for your continued

[10:17:44 AM]

efforts in all of these areas. I need to clarify the booster. So -- I'm sorry, I know you presented this information in past weeks and there's a lot of information out there on the website. But first of all I want to step back and say how excited I am that pediatric vaccines may be just literally a day away. And thank you for all the preparation that you've done to make sure that those are going to be -- as soon as the fda gives approval, you're poised to provide those. That's great news. I wanted to clarify about the boosters. It's my understanding based on the information out there that if you are not -- some of us have passed our six-month period but those if the community who have passed their period but are not in one of those high-risk groups are not eligible for a booster. It's hard to say that in a negative term. Do you have a sense of how soon boosters can be accessed by

[10:18:45 AM]

those who don't have underlying conditions but do have -- but have passed their six-month period?

>> I would first of all ask people to look at that list, because it is extensive and talk to a provider, because they may actually qualify for that booster and not be aware of it. And with regards to when they will expand it to all of those who have received the mrna pfizer or modern shots, that will probably be happening within the next several months, but we have not been given a time as yet. But I would really urge people to talk to their provider because they may actually qualify and not realize it, as we've discussed earlier.

>> Tovo: Even though they may not see a condition on that list?

[10:19:45 AM]

>> Yeah, I would definitely have them reach out to their doctor to make sure that they don't actually qualify for a booster.

>> Tovo: Thank you. And I think I heard you suggest that individuals who are visiting family members with underlying conditions might qualify for a booster through their association or a pending visit. Did I understand that correctly when you were talking about holiday times, I think I heard you talk about boosters in that context. So if there's an individual who doesn't have one of those underlying conditions, but is visiting with a family member who does --

>> Then the booster --

>> Tovo: Qualify based on that association?

>> Right. Because they are associated or living with someone who is immune compromised.

>> Tovo: So the answer is yes, they would qualify?

>> They may qualify based on that, yes.

>> Tovo: Who would be the arbiter of that? How would you suggest -- is that

[10:20:45 AM]

also a conversation that an individual would have with their provider?

>> Yes, it would be.

>> Tovo: Okay. Thank you.

>> Yeah.

>> Mayor Adler: And just for completeness of answer on that question, if you have the j&j as your additional shot, then you qualify for a booster -- everyone who had j&j as an initial shot is qualified for a booster two months after the first dose, isn't that correct?

>> Yes, sir.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. Thank you. Kathie's question seemed to be targeted more toward pfizer.

>> Tovo: I appreciate that clarification. Thanks, mayor.

>> Mayor Adler: Sure. Councilmember alter?

>> Alter: Good morning. I continue to be pleased with our efforts here and -- you join my colleagues in thanking all of the folks who are out there day in, day out. I wanted to dive a little bit deeper into the preparations for holidays and the recommendations

[10:21:53 AM]

recommendations. The data you presented suggested that letting up on masking might lead to more of a spike. What are the recommendations if you are going to be with a group that's all vaccinated indoors? I'm not talking a 50-person group or something, but like a six to ten-person group if everyone is vaccinated with respect to masking. Obviously if people are out and about they can always be exposed. But I just wanted to get some greater clarity on those recommendations if we ought to be masking in small groups.

>> If you're in a small group with people that you regularly associate with and they're all vaccinated, asymptomatic, and they have not had any high-risk exposures, you probably are just fine to have that gathering without masking. If it's outdoors it's even safer. So any opportunity that presents

[10:22:55 AM]

itself where people can be outside gathering, that is a much safer choice.

>> Alter: Okay. Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. And again I'll just reiterate, everybody, the city and county staffs are doing a great job of driving down the numbers of unvaccinated. It's a really good idea to be focusing as you are on people who have been vaccinated one time, because those are people that have shown a willingness to participate. So that makes real good sense to me and I like seeing that. I think the question a lot of people in the community are asking, as to what councilmember alter and others were asking, which is kind of this ambiguous place we're in where our numbers now are a seven-day moving

[10:23:56 AM]

average of 15, which is close to another break point on the chart to start thinking about. I hear what you're saying is that the safest thing is for people to continue masking when they can, because it's just safer to do. But yet we know there are a lot of places where that's not happening. With the positivity going down to 4.7, there are a lot of indications that are leading people to relax. And there's a lot of environments where that happens. But all we have to do is take a look at what's happening in the United Kingdom to be reminded of how this is cyclical and that we're approaching another period, you know, at the end of December where if historical patterns follow each other, you know, we could be looking at another cycle and it's our job

[10:24:56 AM]

to keep that as low as we possibly can. The best way to do that is with vaccinations, which is why we continue to push for that. Your advice that it is always safer for everyone in the room if people are wearing masks is correct and good advice and I recognize that people will be making all kind of individual decisions. Thank you for the work that you're all doing. Without any other questions, I'll turn it back to the county judge.

>> Judge Brown: Thank you very much, mayor, and thank you, everybody, for working together on getting through this. And I guess we will go ahead and adjourn now until 10:40. Does that work, commissioner Travillion?

>> Travillion: 10:40?

>> Judge Brown: 10:45.

[10:25:57 AM]

Go until 10:45.

>> Travillion: I am shocked and dismayed.

[ Laughing ]

>> Judge Brown: Mayor, I'll pass it to you to do the same.

>> Mayor Adler: Sounds good. Colleagues, we're done for today, collectively, so we're going to adjourn this meeting now at 12:25 -- 10:25.