



**CITY OF HOUSTON**  
Health and Fire Departments

**Sylvester Turner**

Mayor

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Sylvester Turner  
Mayor

Brenda Bazan  
President and CEO  
Houston First Corporation

Dear Mayor Turner and Ms. Bazan:

I write to confirm that Houston is confronting an unparalleled and frightening escalation in the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Our metropolitan area in general – and Houston in particular – are now among the national epicenters of current COVID-19 outbreaks. The daily chart of COVID-19 hospital admissions in Harris County has been a very steep line upward for the past five weeks. The Houston area has experienced a sharp rise in COVID-19 cases since Memorial Day. Now, COVID-19 infections are three times greater than they were at the peak experienced earlier this spring. Houston is now among the national epicenters of current COVID-19 outbreaks and today Texas Medical Center hospitals enacted their Phase II plans to expand intensive care unit capacity.

To further evidence the crisis, recently, Governor Abbott issued Executive Order GA-29 on July 2 ordering the use of face masks in public to help slow the spread of COVID-19 as new infections and hospitalizations are surging, and preventable deaths continue to mount. This comes after the Executive Order GA-29 on June 26 to close bars, halt further reopening and delay elective surgeries in eight of the state's hardest hit counties. Harris County upgraded its threat level indicator to a *Level 1: Stay Home* on June 26. Level one signifies a severe and uncontrolled level of COVID-19 in Harris County, meaning outbreaks are present and worsening and that testing, and contact tracing capacity is strained or exceeded. At this level, residents are advised take action to minimize contacts with others wherever possible and avoid leaving home except for the most essential needs like going to the grocery store for food and medicine.

World class epidemiologists opine and have evidence to support that the rate of infected persons is increasing exponentially. Just today, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,

Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) described the situation as, "...accelerating, and we have clearly not reached the peak of the pandemic." Furthermore, the WHO has been petitioned by over 200 scientists to consider changing the classification of the SARS CoV-2 virus transmission from droplet to aerosol. Benedetta Allegranzi, the WHO's technical lead for infection prevention and control, today said there was evidence emerging of airborne transmission of the coronavirus, "The possibility of airborne transmission in public settings - especially in very specific conditions, crowded, closed, poorly ventilated settings that have been described, cannot be ruled out." Aerosol transmission in a large indoor gathering can be expected to be considered a "super spreader" event.

Currently, due to the spike in COVID-19 cases, accompanied by a steady rise in hospitalizations since the lifting of the restrictions intended to contain the virus, the risk of COVID-19 spreading at a large in-person gathering in Houston is high. A convention attended by thousands of people will be within the Highest Risk Event Category as it will be difficult (more likely impossible) to maintain social distancing and appropriate hygiene practices at a convention facility over multiple days attended by people from distant locations.

The planned use of the George R. Brown for convention activities over the next month is a clear and present danger to the health and well-being of convention attendees, workers, local hotel and restaurant owners and Houstonians because of the surging pandemic.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Persse MD". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

David Persse, MD