

May 2020

## Highlights from TX RPC Members Conducting COVID-19 Research

### Epidemiologists on the Front Lines of the COVID-19 Response

Catherine Troisi, PhD, MS - UTHealth School of Public Health in Houston

Dr. Troisi has written several opinion pieces for the Houston Chronicle.

Key Takeaways from Opinion Piece on April 27, 2020:

- Epidemiologists serve on the front lines of the COVID-19 response.
- Robust contact tracing needs to be in place for easing of social distancing to occur.

[READ THE ARTICLE](#)

Dr. Troisi also appears on the Q&A part of the Thursday Houston Matters show. On the April 2 show, Dr. Troisi spoke with Ernie Manouse.

Dr. Troisi addresses questions and concerns about Coronavirus as a public service to listeners including:

- Q: I'm fully on board with wearing a mask in public, however what are the limits? I'm wondering about being outside when I'm walking my dog and thinking about how someone might've coughed a few minutes earlier.
- A: It is not recommended to wear masks while being outside to exercise yet, but the CDC might change their guidance. The downside of wearing a mask is that it might make people feel that they are immune to the virus.
  
- Q: We know the Coronavirus can be on surfaces and we're taking precautions on washing hands, but can the virus infect you if you have a cut or open wound on your hand?
- A: The main way the Coronavirus can infect you is through the respiratory route, not through touching surfaces. If you have a cut or open wound, the virus would just die. Viruses can only replicate when they are inside a cell.

[LISTEN TO THE 55-MINUTE Q&A](#)

### Considerations for Re-Opening the Economy

Joseph McCormick, MD - UTHealth School of Public Health in Brownsville

Dr. McCormick was recently on a podcast hosted by Congressman Filemon Vela of Brownsville along with Angela Burton of the Small Business Administration, and Julian Alvarez of the Texas Workforce Commission.

**Key takeaways:**

- We must look at countries like China, South Korea and Taiwan and others where the

- spread of COVID-19 may be under control so we can learn from what they did.
- A major obstacle to re-opening the economy is due to lack of adequate testing.
- Re-opening the economy must be driven by science, we need to watch for a recurrence, obtain more information about individual's experiences, and we need to listen to our health professionals.

[LISTEN TO THE 1-HR PODCAST](#)

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## COVID-19 Reopen Texas: Return to Work the Right Way Webinar Series

### Dave Douphrate, PhD - UTHealth School of Public Health in Dallas

A seven-part complimentary statewide weekly industry-specific webinar series is being held to support our community in looking at what the immediate future holds for various Texas industries. Each webinar will feature a panel of specialists in occupational safety, occupational medicine, risk assessment, and guest panelists who are industry representatives experienced in return to work practices. Registration is required to join each weekly webinar.

- Retail Industry, May 20, 2020 (available post-webinar recording)
- Restaurant Industry, May 27, 2020
- Construction & Manufacturing, June 3, 2020
- Places of Worship, June 10, 2020
- Promoting Mental Health and Employee Resilience, June 17, 2020
- Personal Care Establishments, June 24, 2020
- Other Healthcare Settings, July 1, 2020

[REGISTER FOR THE WEBINAR SERIES](#)

## Resources from TX RPC Members and Organizations

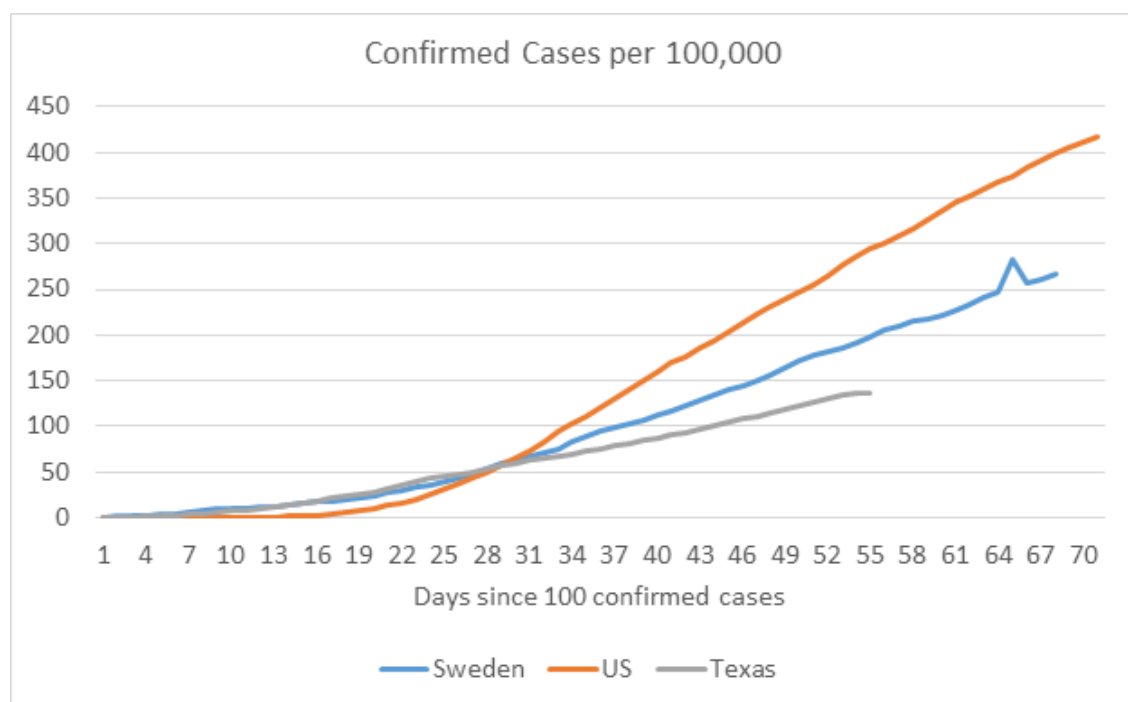
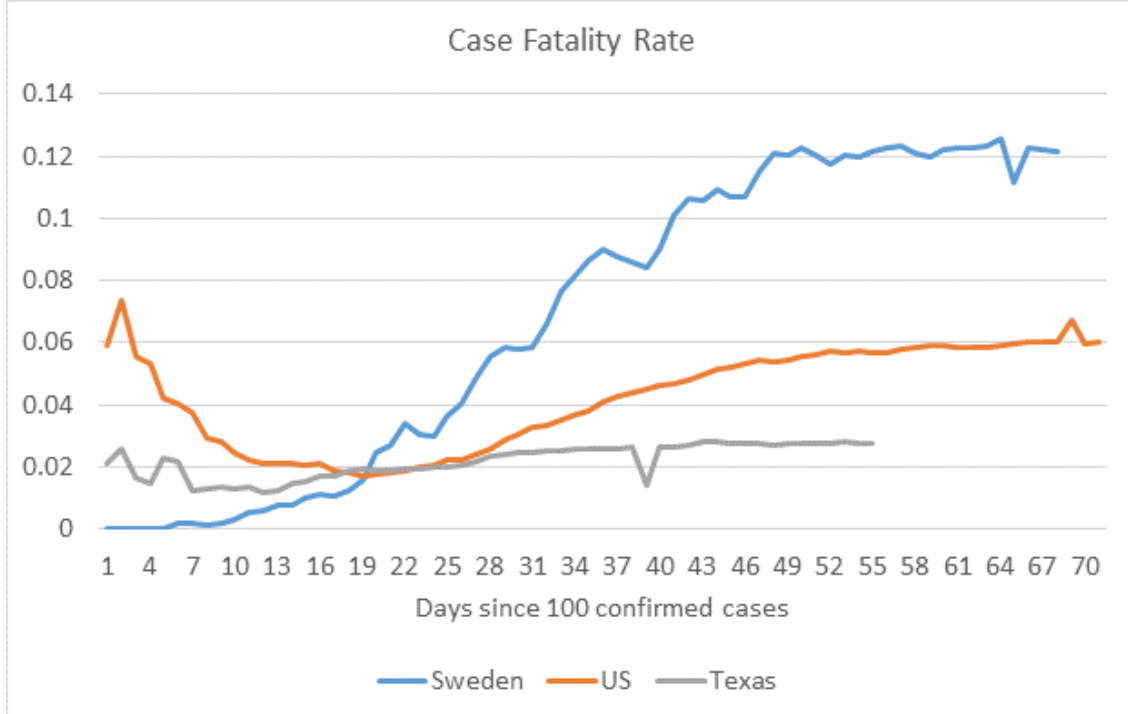
### Impact of Herd Immunity Approaches on COVID-19 Case Fatality Rate

#### Katelyn K. Jetelina, PhD, MPH - UTHealth School of Public Health in Dallas

Dr. Jetelina is posting data-driven Coronavirus updates on her [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) page called "Your Local Epidemiologist".

**Dr. Jetelina's latest update (5/13):**

"As of May 13<sup>th</sup>, Sweden has taken a different approach to herd immunity compared to the United States (and Texas) by not closing public spaces. This hasn't had an impact on the number of cases per population. However, it has impacted the case fatality rate (the proportion of patients who die from that condition). Sweden's CFR (12.1%) is double that of the US (6.0%) and more than quadruple that of Texas (2.7%)."



[VIEW ON FACEBOOK](#)

### Sugary Drinks Threaten the Health of Texas Children UTHealth School of Public Health in Austin

The Texas Child Health Status Report Project has released the *Healthy Children, Healthy State* one-pager on Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption (SSB) in Texas.

**Key Takeaways:**

- Sugar-sweetened beverages have negative health associations, such as obesity, Type 2 Diabetes, and heart disease, all of which increase morbidity rates for those who may contract COVID-19.
- 53.4% of second graders in Texas consume one or more SSB's daily.
- We can improve Texas children's daily SSB consumption by supporting policies that

[SEE REPORT](#)

## About the TX RPC Project

The Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration (Texas RPC) project is a non-partisan network that aims to bridge research and policy by supporting partnerships between child health researchers and policymakers.

[Learn more online.](#)

The purpose of the TX RPC Newsletter is to provide relevant, data-driven health information to Texas policymakers. This newsletter will facilitate communication about the recent COVID-19 pandemic implications related to public health, as well as provide communication about other current health issues.

## Contact Us

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