

**Subject:** Comal County COVID-19 update: Epidemiologist on board; zero new cases  
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## COMAL COUNTY

### PUBLIC INFORMATION

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## COVID-19 update: Comal County welcomes epidemiologist

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, APRIL 17, 2020:

*NEW BRAUNFELS* — Comal County this week welcomed on board Connie Alaniz, the Office of Public Health’s first full-time epidemiologist, in its battle against the coronavirus.

Alaniz came out of retirement to take the position; in 2018, she retired after 30 years with the state, including the last nine as an epidemiologist for the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Region 8.

“We are thrilled to welcome Connie to our office,” said Director of Public Health Cheryl Fraser. “Her experience is much needed in helping us conduct the investigations that will identify clusters and outbreaks and help us limit the spread of the virus as much as possible.”

Alaniz will take charge of the county's contact investigations, conducted after each positive test is confirmed. Currently, the Office of Public Health nursing staff is sharing those responsibilities as COVID-19 cases have climbed in the county.

Each investigation requires hours of conversations with patients and their families, as well as anyone they came into contact with, to determine the source of the infection, if possible, and alert contacts of the need to self-quarantine for two weeks.

"When something like this is going on, it's like watching a fire and not helping," Alaniz said of her decision to come out of retirement. "I wanted to be involved again."

With DSHS Region 8, Alaniz investigated diseases such as the 2009 H1N1 influenza outbreak, as well as food-borne illnesses caused by listeria and salmonella. Her assigned area included neighboring Guadalupe County.

"Connie's knowledge of our area and experience in investigating and studying outbreaks made her a perfect fit for our office," Fraser said.

Alaniz's position is funded through a state grant program aimed at helping local entities fight coronavirus; it expires March 15, 2021, unless extended beforehand. Commissioners Court approved the county's application for the grant on April 2.

### **COVID-19 update**

Comal County confirmed zero positive cases of COVID-19 for a second straight day and received 35 reports of negative tests.

As of Friday morning, the Office of Public Health has received reports of the following test information:

- 577 tests conducted
- 43 positive tests
- 489 negative tests
- 45 results still pending

Information about COVID-19, as well as coronavirus-related county office closures and restrictions, is available at [www.comalcountytexas.com/covid19](http://www.comalcountytexas.com/covid19).

Residents with questions or concerns about the novel coronavirus can call the county's dedicated COVID-19 hotline, 830-221-1120, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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