Following the pattern of his recent announcements, Governor Greg Abbott today did not hold a press conference, but issued a proclamation (GA-27), suspending elective surgeries at hospitals in Cameron, Hidalgo, Nueces, and Webb counties to help ensure hospital bed availability for COVID-19 patients in those communities. Today’s proclamation amends the Governor’s previous Executive Order, which added the four new counties in addition to his original list that included Bexar, Dallas, Harris, and Travis counties.

"As these counties experience a surge in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, we are committed to working alongside hospitals to help ensure that every COVID-19 patient who needs a bed will have access to one," said Governor Abbott. He went on to say that "We are constantly monitoring the data at the local level and will continue to take precautionary action where it is necessary. I want to remind all Texans that each of us have a responsibility to help slow the spread of this virus, and I urge everyone to wear a mask, wash their hands regularly, practice social distancing, and stay home if possible."

By Executive Order, all hospitals in Cameron, Hidalgo, Nueces, Webb, Bexar, Dallas, Harris, and Travis counties are to postpone surgeries and procedures that are not immediately, medically necessary to correct a serious medical condition or to preserve the life of a patient, who without immediate performance of the surgery or procedure, would be at risk for serious adverse medical consequences or death, as determined by the patient’s physician. The new order also includes authorization for Governor Abbott, at his sole discretion, to add or subtract from the list of counties included in the Executive Order as a way to address surges in hospitalizations that may arise in other parts of the state. For details on GA-27, please this link.

The inclusion of these new counties, in advance of the July 4th holiday, seeking to ensure adequate hospital capacity, could spell trouble for additional restrictions to come. There are already rumors swirling around the Capitol about additional restrictions to help stem the rapid increase in COVID-19 cases.