

Texas this week reached 10,000 virus deaths, joining New York, New Jersey and California as the only states to reach that grim milestone. Nearly four in five of those deaths have come since the beginning of June, and August has routinely seen hundreds of deaths added daily in the aftermath of a massive summer outbreak in Texas.

Despite the mounting deaths, Republican Gov. Greg Abbott and local leaders say the outlook in Texas is improving. Hospitalizations have plunged by the thousands from July's peak and held steady with about 6,200 patients Tuesday.

The rolling average of people who test positive for the virus in Texas also remained around 11%.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said a positivity rate under 10% is an indicator that a state has robust testing. Texas health officials say demand for testing has dropped in recent weeks even though plenty of tests are available.