

(Reuters) - Texas on Wednesday set one-day records for increases in COVID-19 deaths and hospitalizations in the state, forcing one county to store bodies in refrigerated trucks and prompting a top health official there to call for new stay-at-home orders.

Texas, which reported 197 deaths and 10,893 hospitalizations, has been one of the states hardest hit by the resurgent coronavirus. Hidalgo County, at the southern tip of the state on the U.S. border with Mexico, has seen cases rise 60 percent in the last week, according to a Reuters tally, with deaths doubling to more than 360.

“We’ve got to lasso this virus, this stallion, bring the numbers back down and get control of this thing,” Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez said. “Because our hospitals – they’re war zones, they are really struggling right now.”

Cortez, a Democrat who serves as the top county official, issued a shelter-in-place order for residents. That mandate put him at odds with Republican Governor Greg Abbott, who maintains that local officials do not have the authority to make residents stay home. Crematoriums in the Hidalgo area have a wait list of two weeks, Cortez said, forcing the county to use five refrigerated trucks that can hold 50 bodies each.

Hidalgo’s top medical official, Dr. Ivan Melendez, partly blamed Abbott’s move to override local officials for the spike in coronavirus infections, which he said has jammed the local medical system at every level.

“Do I think that a stay-at-home order is medically indicated at this point? Absolutely,” Melendez said.

On Tuesday, U.S. deaths from COVID-19 topped 1,000 in a single day for the first time since June 10. More than 142,000 people have died in the country during the past five months and deaths are rising in 23 states, according to the Reuters tally.

The country’s three most populous states, Florida, Texas and California, top the list of 44 states where cases are increasing, based on a Reuters analysis.