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Weekly Bulletin

Date: August 14, 2020

Subject: Island County COVID-19 Response

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Review of Current News and Updates

Numbers and data. At the time of this writing, Island County has 249 confirmed COVID-19 cases, including 11 deaths. Twenty-four individuals have been added to the case count for the month of August, so far. We are happy to see a decline this week in our case rate and are hopeful our community can continue this trend.

Modified Phase 3. We are trying to emphasize that we are in a reduced Modified Phase 3; Phase 3 [restrictions](#) are in effect. The number of individuals allowed in social gatherings during Phase 3 has been reduced to 10 people per week and a statewide ban has been placed on both indoor and outdoor live entertainment. These restrictions apply only to social gatherings. Funerals, weddings and religious activities are currently exempt from these requirements.

Governor Inslee announced additional Safe Start restrictions on July 23. The complete list of changes is available for review on the [Governor's Medium page](#). Effective July 30, a reduced occupancy limitation was placed on restaurants and centers for fitness, entertainment, and recreation, with supplementary restrictions applying to each facility. Effective August 6, wedding and funeral receptions are prohibited, with ceremonies limited to maximum indoor occupancy of 20%, or up to 30 people, whichever is less, as long as social distancing can be observed. Other updated guidance this week includes-

The agricultural event guidelines apply to livestock and horse exhibitions, shows, sales, auctions, companion animal (dog, cats, rabbits, etc.) shows, or any substantially similar event.

- [Phase 2 Agricultural Events COVID-19 Requirements](#)
- [Memo: Agricultural Events](#)
- The [updated guidance](#) for religious and faith-based services, which reduces restrictions for some religious and faith-based services, is now in effect. Read the full updated guidance [here](#)

Increasing COVID-19 spread. According to the August 7th [Situation Report](#), COVID-19 transmission continues to increase or accelerate across most of Washington State and will continue to do so unless concrete steps are taken to stop the spread. In both eastern and western Washington, cases are increasing among 40-60 year olds and 70+ groups. Eleven cases of a rare but serious COVID-19 related condition in children have been reported. This condition is known as

Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS-C). MIS-C is a rare but serious condition first identified by health care providers in the United Kingdom in late April. In Washington, six MIS-C cases are nine years old or younger, and five are 10 or older. 40 states have reported a total of 570 cases. Read the DOH release [here](#).

WA State changes negative test reporting for COVID-19. Washington State Department of Health announced COVID-19 testing data will soon be reported using the total number of tests completed. This is a change from the current reporting, which reflects the total number of unique individuals ever tested. During this transition, the COVID-19 testing dashboards will not be updated and will show preliminary data through August 10 using the old methodology. Full news release [here](#).

COVID-19 webpage resources. Changes to the COVID-19 webpage will be taking place throughout the next few weeks in an effort to update data presentation and improve resource accessibility. We have created a table version of the [Phase and Risk Assessment Dashboard](#) for the ICPH webpage and a trial version has been implemented, with plans to update weekly. This information includes the link to the state page which may be updated more often.

Testing. WhidbeyHealth continues to offer drive-thru COVID-19 [swabbing stations](#) in Clinton, Coupeville, and Oak Harbor. Individuals interested in being tested must pre-register by calling the hotline at 360.240.4055; Monday through Friday between 7 am and 5 pm. [Island Hospital](#) and [Skagit County Public Health](#) also offer COVID-19 testing, with drive-thru rapid testing held at Skagit Valley College in Mount Vernon.

Schools. The weekly call with schools is well attended and the ICPH schools team is working to review opening plans. ICPH is also working with case/contact investigators to create a clear protocol for dealing with potential cases in schools. Schools have requested additional input from ICPH regarding “back-to-school” planning. Keith and staff are working with each district to identify needs and address them appropriately.

Governor Inslee has released [education recommendations](#) for the 2020-2021 school year. Counties are organized into high, moderate, and low risk recommendation groups, which are determined by the number of new cases per 100,000 residents over a two-week period. Island County is currently in the moderate range, with cases ranging from (23.6 to 30) new cases per 100,000 residents over two-week period. This chart is being updated regularly on our website.

Camano/Stanwood, Coupeville and South Whidbey plan to start the school year with virtual learning and bringing in students in particular categories- Students enrolled in: PreK, special education, and with other unique needs like; McKinny Vento Students, English language learners, Students without internet, Kindergarten Students. Skagit Valley Community college will have most instruction online. Oak Harbor school district will have a phased opening with PK-4 opening with in school hybrid model and older students with a virtual schedule to start.

Media briefing to discuss COVID-19 modeling and school reopening was conducted today with reference to this report- [Maximizing education while minimizing COVID risk: priorities and pitfalls for reopening schools](#)

Long Term Care Facilities. Gov. Jay Inslee and officials from the state Department of Health and Department of Social and Health Services announced a phased plan for long-term care facilities (LTCF) to safely allow visitors, provide trips for residents outside the facility, group activities, and more. It goes into effect August 12. As with schools, allowable activities at LTCFs depends on sustained prevention of COVID-19 transmission in the community. Island County LTCF Liason is working with facilities to understand the new guidance you can find [here](#).

Avoid travel. Community members are strongly [discouraged from non-essential travel](#), especially to counties in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Safe Start plan. For necessary travel, individuals should research the intended destination ahead of time by using the [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#) and [Phase and Risk Assessment Dashboard](#) to assess COVID-19 exposure risk.

Available Resources. A number of resources are currently available to Washingtonians that may help mitigate some negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Island County has been awarded funds under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (“CARES Act”). Individuals and families impacted by COVID-19 should complete the [online referral form](#) or call the Human Services Help Line at 360.678.2346 to learn more.
- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC) will [offer services remotely](#) until Sept. 30. In lieu of in-person visits, WIC may enroll new applicants, provide nutrition education and breastfeeding support and issue food benefits by phone or video chat.
- ISLAND COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES
<https://www.islandcountywa.gov/Humanservices/Pages/Home.aspx>
360-678-7880 (office phone tree) 360-678-2346 (helpline)
Island County Human Services is an accessible and responsive community resource. They can assist with housing resources, mental health care, substance use, developmental disabilities, veterans resources, and early childhood parenting support.

The call center is staffed Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm (360.678.2301).