



Island County

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District 1 News - March 19, 2020

Greetings from District 1 Commissioner Helen Price Johnson,

The number of Island County COVID-19 cases continue to rise and are now spread throughout the region. Each case is investigated and there has been no evidence of any particular outbreak cluster. If a cluster is identified, that information will be reported. I want to emphasize this point - **everyone is equally at risk to exposure**. People over the age of 60, and those with underlying chronic health conditions are most at risk of serious illness. The local COVID-19 case numbers are updated on the [County website](#) each day at 4:00 p.m. The Island County Public Health Facebook page is updated twice a day. A call center is open weekdays 8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., and weekends 9:00 am-4:00 p.m.. **Please call 360.678.2301** with any questions or concerns you may have. Subscribe to updates [here](#).

At this week's Board of Health meeting, we received a briefing from Captain Denise Gechas, from NAS-Whidbey Island. She explained that coronavirus testing has started on the base and that military labs will be handling these samples, thus not impacting the civilian lab capacity. She reported that there is great communication between the County Response Team and Whidbey Health. The Navy has been able to assist with some of the local protective gear supply shortages.

Also we learned that Washington State grant funds will be made available to Counties to help assist with sheltering individuals who need to quarantine, but lack adequate housing. This is a very welcome resource, and the Board of Commissioners have already taken action to swiftly get these funds flowing to meet the growing needs. Furthermore, we were informed about our county's outreach efforts with the developmental disabled community to help explain and navigate this crisis.

Washington has a [new statewide COVID-19 website](#) that is up and running. It is maintained by the state's Joint Information Center and is in addition to the Governor's webpage [specifically dedicated to COVID-19](#). With the situation changing quickly throughout the state, these pages are intended to provide a variety of resources in a straightforward manner.

I hope this finds you well, you are washing hands often, and minimizing your contact with people outside of your household.

It is a scary time for many. Please reach out to County Human Services office at (360) 678-7880, if you need to talk to someone about your fears.

I'm grateful for the beautiful weather and for the many caring people we have in this community.

We are all in this together.

Please stay safely sheltered at home, as much as possible.