

Notification regarding 3rd positive COVID-19 Case in Pacific County

April 19, 2020

We have received notice of a 3rd positive case of covid-19 in Pacific County. The individual has been isolated and close contacts of the individual are currently being contacted by our public health nurses with instructions to quarantine per DOH guidelines. This case is in addition to the out of state case reported on 4/10 and the first in county case reported yesterday (4/18). We continue to encourage the public to stay home except for essential business, wear face masks if you must go out, wash your hands often with hot soapy water for at least 20 seconds, and continue to social distance. For up to date information and guidance about how to keep yourself and your family healthy, please visit: www.coronavirus.wa.gov .

Update 9:07pm 4/19/20-

We'd like to provide some additional information to address people's concerns regarding the two recent positive COVID-19 cases in Pacific County. We understand the frustration felt by some due to the lack of details surrounding the case. Please understand we must consider several factors when determining which information, we are able to share.

First, as a health care provider we are bound by HIPPA and must consider rights to privacy of the individuals involved. HIPPA prevents us from sharing information that could be used to identify individuals who've been diagnosed with COVID-19. While it may be acceptable to cite zip codes in larger counties, it is not appropriate to do so given our small population (just over 21,000), and given the fact that we do not have a large number of cases at this point. Should our case count increase, we may be able to share aggregate data regarding location in the future, but at this point, with only two cases, we are unable to do so.

Second, we are currently conducting a thorough investigation regarding both cases. The investigation includes an interview with the patient and determines the contagious period for each case (DOH guidelines indicate contagious period to start 48 hours prior to first symptom and last until 72 hours after last symptom). Nurses contact any individuals who may have been exposed to the person during the contagious period. This would include persons living in the same home with the person who's been infected, notification of workplace (if applicable), and assessment and notification of other close contacts during the contagious period. If you are identified as a person who has been exposed, you will be contacted by a public health nurse with instruction to quarantine. Close contact for COVID-19 is defined as being within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 10 minutes. It is important to note that the definition of "close contact" (and the related investigation) would be different depending on the disease or infection and how contagious is it. For example, investigation, public notification, and definition of "close contact" for measles which is much more contagious than COVID-19, would be handled differently.

Finally, regardless of where the case(s) reside geographically, our advice to the public remains the same- stay home except for essential business and wash your hands. If you notice symptoms, call your health care provider for advice or call the EOC to get screened for drive through testing. This is the best way for the public to protect themselves. If you are identified as a close contact of a current case, you will be notified by one of our public health nurses. Our intention is be transparent and provide as much information as we can to the public. If you have questions regarding how we report information, the investigation process, or anything else related to COVID-19, please contact us at the EOC at 360-875-9407. We appreciate your understanding and patience as we navigate this situation. Thank you and please continue to #StayHomeStayHealthy

