



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 29, 2020

Media Contact: Melissa Morin, Communications Specialist
Phone: (360) 778-6022; (360) 594-2504
E-mail address: mmorin@whatcomcounty.us

Whatcom County Health Department Responding to COVID-19 Developments

BELLINGHAM, WA – There continues to be no cases of COVID-19 and no persons under investigation in Whatcom County at this time. However, following the recent identification of five new presumptive positive cases, the risk is increasing in Washington state.

“Given what is happening in Washington state, we believe we are in the early stages of what we anticipate to be wider spread in the United States,” Whatcom County Health Officer Dr. Greg Stern reports. “Our efforts now are focused on slowing the spread of disease to lessen disruption to our community and healthcare system.”

These efforts include:

- Meeting with key community stakeholder groups the week of March 2 to coordinate plans and provide guidance for decision makers in considering community measures to reduce transmission, or [non-pharmaceutical interventions](#). These meetings will include elected officials, public safety officials, healthcare providers, schools, child care facilities, housing partners, and others.
- Continuing to provide guidance and consultation to healthcare providers as they evaluate patients based on the evolving CDC guidelines. Testing is limited to patients meeting the specific criteria outlined in CDC guidelines.

Now that we are seeing community spread, individual actions and preparation are even more important.

- Prevention starts with good personal health habits: stay home when you are sick, cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, wash your hands frequently with soap and water, and clean frequently-touched surfaces and objects.
- Plan for how you will care for kids or other loved ones at home.
- Discuss sick leave policies and telework options with your employer.
- Be ready to help neighbors and elders in your community.
- Stay informed by and share reliable sources of information, such as the [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#) and the [Washington State Department of Health](#).

For more information on novel coronavirus

This is an emerging outbreak with rapidly evolving information. Updates will be made as new information emerges on the [DOH website](#) and [Whatcom County Health Department's website](#). The Washington State Department of Health has established a call center to address questions from the public. If you have questions about what is happening in Washington state, how the virus is spread, and what to do if you have symptoms, please call 1-800-525-0127 and press #.

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