

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Date: May 5th, 2020

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### **Kittitas County's Application Sent for Variance – Still Under Review**

The Kittitas County Incident Management Team (IMT) submitted the variance application to begin Phase 2 of the Phased Approach to Reopening Washington Plan. Kittitas County has not yet received feedback or approval to the variance and we are not currently in Phase 2. The IMT anticipates that our county will receive a response this week.

The application required documentation that Kittitas County has the capacity to perform case investigations, trace contacts, house people and provide case management for people in need of isolation and quarantine, and rapidly respond to outbreaks within our county. The application is reviewed by the Washington State Secretary of Health. “We are not guaranteed approval,” states Health Officer Dr. Mark Larson. “It is feasible that the state will require changes or more resources in specific areas before we can move to Phase 2.”

Kittitas County is proceeding with extreme caution. Numerous partners were required to weigh in on the decision to pursue the variance, which included local municipalities, county officials, and hospital personnel. We want to remind our residents that we should be proceeding to operate under Phase 1: High risk populations stay home, some outdoor recreation, no social or spiritual gatherings, only essential travel, and limited employers operating at this time.

“We are responding to peoples’ concerns now about people traveling to our area,” states Health Officer Dr. Mark Larson. “We will continue to use education and monitor the situation. If issues arise, we have an Incident Management Team ready to respond, accordingly.”

The IMT will release a daily update regarding the variance status. Questions about your health should be directed to your local healthcare provider or you can call the Temporary COVID Clinic at KVH at 509-933-8850. For general COVID-19 questions, the Emergency Operation Center is at 509-933-8315 or 509-933-8305.

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