Kittitas County
Public Health
Department

To Protect and Promote the Health and the Environment of the People of Kittitas County

PRESS RELEASE

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Kittitas County COVID-19 Update

The Kittitas County Public Health Department (KCPHD) continues to see high numbers of COVID-19 cases and is continuing into the third year of response along with partners like school districts and medical facilities. Community transmission is high. Kittitas Valley Healthcare (KVH) has seen the highest number of people testing in a day and KCPHD has seen the highest number of positive cases during the month of January.

We continue to prioritize our response during changing requirements. "We empathize with our community who is also tired of living with COVID-19," states KPCHD Director Tristen Lamb. "We know our residents are also tired, frustrated, and overwhelmed by the large amount of information and the changes that come from updated guidelines and recommendations."

Our response is prioritizing school aged individuals who are positive and individuals who are over 60 years of age. With this prioritization, KCPHD has temporarily stopped updating the dashboard. However, with systems in place after years of response, there is accurate data available through state and federal systems via the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

For now, every positive case of COVID-19 is considered a *reportable condition*. A reportable condition is required by law to be relayed to the local health jurisdiction. Positive cases from laboratory testing are entered into the Washington State Disease Reporting (WDRS) reporting system. It is via WDRS that informs the DOH data dashboard automatically without KCPHD input.

Updating the dashboard is difficult, because it requires personnel resources we do not currently have. KCPHD receives notification of individuals in WDRS and starts case investigation paperwork. Individuals are asked information about their current symptoms, vaccination status, etcetera. All that information is input into our local KCPHD Access Database, but only one user can be in that system at a time. Our Access database is not connected to state systems and is not required. It is now redundant with the DOH dashboard.

Changes during a pandemic create more frustration and stress. "We are absolutely going to see more changes in the future," states Director Lamb. "We want people to do the best they can to mitigate against the current pandemic."

The best actions you can take to protect yourself include the following:

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- Stay home when you are sick.
- Get tested if you believe you have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Wear a proper face covering.
- Be aware of who is most at risk of COVID-19.
- Get a COVID-19 vaccination if you are 5 years of age and older.
- Get a COVID-19 booster if you are 12 years of age and older.

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