

HEALTH ADVISORY



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

REGION IV PUBLIC HEALTH

Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum
counties and Cowlitz Tribe

To: Physicians and other health care providers

Please distribute a copy of this information to each provider in your organization.

Questions regarding this information may be directed to the following Region IV health officers:

Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH

Clark County Public Health, 564.397.8182

Skamania County Community Health, 509.427.3850

Cowlitz County Health & Human Services, 360.414.5599

Wahkiakum County Health & Human Services, 360.795.6207

Steven Krager, MD, MPH

Clark County Public Health, 564.397.8182

Skamania County Community Health, 509.427.3850

Cowlitz County Health & Human Services, 360.414.5599

Wahkiakum County Health & Human Services, 360.795.6207

Alert categories:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.

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Summary

Washington is seeing widespread community transmission of COVID-19. Please report positive COVID-19 results to your local health department **immediately**. There are reports of significant shortages of PPE and testing supplies and the FDA has released guidance about conservation strategies for health care workers (HCW). Long term care facilities (LTCF) should place residents with respiratory symptoms on standard/droplet/contact precautions, and should not deny admission of new residents based on a pending COVID-19 test.

Reporting COVID-19

Please call your local health department (see numbers below) immediately upon confirmation of a positive COVID-19 lab. Public health relies on our local providers to report positive results as quickly as possible.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Patients with known or suspected COVID-19 who are critically ill as well as those requiring aerosol generating procedures are recommended to be placed in **standard/airborne/contact precautions with eye protection**. For other patients with known or suspected COVID-19, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) recommends using **standard/droplet/contact precautions with eye protection**.

Guidance document for PPE from DOH:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/ppeCOVID-19confirmed.pdf>

Strategies for PPE Conservation

During limited supply of PPE, facilities could consider having healthcare providers continue to wear the same surgical mask (i.e., extended use), remove only used gloves and gowns, and perform hand hygiene between treating patients with the same infectious disease diagnosis or exposure who are maintained in a confined area. If the mask, gloves, or gowns become contaminated, replace them.

See further strategies here:

<https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/letters-health-care-providers/surgical-mask-and-gown-conservation-strategies-letter-healthcare-providers>

COVID-19 Testing

To conserve swabs, DOH is recommending one single NP swab be sent for COVID-19 testing. Sputum can also be used for testing, but should only be done for patients with productive cough (sputum induction is not recommended).

See further guidance here:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/Interim-2019NovelCoronavirusQuicksheetProviders.pdf>

Guidance for Long Term Care Facilities

Long term care facilities (LTCF) should place residents with respiratory symptoms on standard/droplet/contact precautions, and residents should be placed in a private room while testing is pending. Residents with respiratory illness can be placed in a similar wing or ward, however, should not be cohorted in the same room until a diagnosis is confirmed.

To alleviate crowding at local hospitals, if appropriate precautions are taking place with residents with respiratory symptoms, facilities should not deny admission of new residents based on a pending COVID-19 test in the facility.

See further guidance here:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/NovelCoronavirusOutbreak2020/LongTermCareFacilities>

Outbreak Update

The outbreak of COVID-19 has now been declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization.

The risk of exposure is increasing for people who live in communities in Washington State with reported spread of COVID-19. As of 3/23/2020 there have been 2221 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Washington State, including 110 deaths.

For up to date information about the Washington COVID-19 outbreak, visit:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus> .

Additional information is also available on the CDC's COVID-19 website,

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

Thank you for your partnership.

Local health jurisdiction	Phone	Fax
Clark County Public Health	564.397.8182	564.397.8080
Cowlitz County Health Department	360.414.5599	360.425.7531
Skamania County Community Health	509.427.3850	509.427.0188
Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services	360.795.6207	360.795.6143

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