May 13, 2020

Recommendations for Phase 2 submitted by Public Health Medical Director today

Dr. Tom Locke, Jefferson County Medical Director, has initiated the first step for Jefferson County to apply for a variance to move to Phase 2 of Gov. Inslee’s Safe Start business re-opening the economy. An eligible jurisdiction could request all activities outlined in Phase 2 be allowed to open or only some of them.

The Phase 2 variance activities recommended by Dr. Locke are:

- Recreation: Outdoor recreation involving fewer than five people outside your household excluding all overnight camping.
- Gatherings: Gather with no more than five people outside your household per week, masking encouraged if social distancing cannot be maintained. Visitors from high prevalence areas strongly discouraged.
- Travel: Essential travel and limited non-essential travel for Phase 2 and 2 permissible activities. Out-of-area tourism strongly discouraged (ferry signage, advertising, local government directives) until statewide Phase 2 implementation.
- Business/Employers: Manufacturing (non-essential repair, maritime industry, and others), additional construction phases, in-home domestic services (nannies, housecleaning, etc.) professional services/office-based business (non-tourism oriented, telework strongly encouraged), pet grooming (local customers only), hair and nail salons/barbers (local customers only).

Phase 2 variance activities NOT recommended include:

- Recreation: Outdoor activity with five or fewer people involving overnight camping (RV or campgrounds).
- Business/Employers: Restaurants with sit-down service, real estate (beyond current permitted activities), pet grooming (out-of-area clients), hair and nail salons/barbers (out-of-area clients, retail (in-store purchases allowed with restrictions), professional services/office-based business (tourism focused).

The County Board of Health will review the recommendations at 2:30 p.m. on May 14. The virtual meeting will be aired live on KPTZ 91.9 FM and there will be a live streaming of the meeting at www.co.jefferson.wa.us. A joint meeting of the City Council, Board of County Commissioners, PUD, the PT Port and Board of Health will convene at 5 p.m. on May 19th.
Governor explains next steps in re-opening process

In a press conference held yesterday, Gov. Inslee announced a plan he calls “Box in the Virus” that particularly highlighted contact tracing throughout the state.

Contact tracing is the process by which investigators trace and monitor contacts infected people have had with others and notifies them of their exposure, according to the CDC.

“Box in the Virus” is a five-part plan that includes the following:

1. Quarantine upon first symptoms and stay quarantined until receiving a negative test result.
2. Test widely
3. Isolate quickly
4. Identify contacts
5. Quarantine contacts

Those who test positive will need to isolate for 14 days, and will include everyone in a household. An interviewer will call those who test positive to identify and inform close contacts of potential exposure. Contact tracers who will be trained and in place by May 15, will include 350 members of the Washington National Guard, 390 Department of Licensing employees and 630 state and local health officials. Here in Jefferson County, the Public Health Dept. currently has seven investigators and two more are being hired.

The reopening of restaurants, a part of Phase 2, and the Governor’s requirement for restaurant owners to get the names, email addresses and phone numbers of their customers is of particular concern to restaurant owners as well as potential customers. If a restaurant offers table service, they are required to create a daily log of all customers and maintain that log for 30 days.

Inslee stated the information collected will only be used by public health professionals and is confidential. It will not be shared, he emphasized. Contacts will not be told the name of the person who may have exposed them to the virus. Contact tracing is voluntary and only those who have agreed to be contacted will be talked to.