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Update on Jefferson County COVID-19 Case Count

Case Count Update:

An additional case of COVID-19 in a Jefferson County Resident was reported to Jefferson County Public Health late in the day on 3/21/20. A case investigation was completed and numerous contacts have been notified and advised to begin a 14 day quarantine starting on their last day of exposure. The exposure source of this individual is unknown and likely to be within the community. **This case represents the 7th lab confirmed case of COVID-19 in a Jefferson County resident. The resident is male and in his 40's. He presented critically ill and was transferred to a Seattle area hospital for intensive care.** This case offers a stark reminder that coronavirus can cause life threatening illness in people younger than 60 years of age. Advancing age or the presence of chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, and immune system suppressing disorders are risk factors for the more severe forms of COVID-19.

The coronavirus pandemic is spreading across Washington State and on the Olympic Peninsula. Too many people are failing to follow the urgent advice of Governor Inslee and public health professionals to avoid public gatherings, follow rigorous hand washing and respiratory hygiene practices, and stay home if you are sick. **Staying home if you are sick means anyone with symptoms of a respiratory infection and/or fever MUST strictly isolate themselves for the duration of their illness AND not return to work or social interactions until it has been 72 hours since their last fever and their respiratory symptoms are substantially improved.** This is especially true for children and young adults who may have only mild symptoms. **While these populations may have a low personal risk of serious complications, their failure to isolate themselves during illness puts high risk populations at increased risk of life-threatening infections.** Current research shows that around 80% of people with COVID-19 have mild to moderate symptoms. Some will be bedridden with flu-like symptoms but will not need supplemental oxygen. 14% will have more severe symptoms with debilitating illness and the need for supplemental oxygen. 6% will be critically ill and require intensive respiratory support including high flow oxygen and mechanical ventilation. Advancing age or chronic disease risk factors increase the chance that an individual will be in this 20% of people with severe or critical illness.

Now is the time to **STAY HOME, STAY HEALTHY.** This is not the time for vacation travel, flocking to public beaches, congregating unnecessarily in groups, or visiting elderly friends and family. **The coronavirus pandemic is an unprecedented public health emergency. Adequate testing resources are critically limited due to a catastrophic failure of federal leadership and planning. Personal protective equipment is in short supply. All of this makes broad-based serious community efforts to slow coronavirus transmission extremely urgent. Together we can slow the transmission of COVID-19 and protect our most vulnerable populations while we await the long-overdue increase in testing and protective equipment resources.**

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Community