



Friday, April 10, 2020

**Whatcom Unified Command moves to expand isolation, quarantine capacity
Planning to ensure cities' COVID-19 needs met**

With work currently underway to activate an isolation and quarantine facility in Bellingham, [Whatcom Unified Command](#) (WUC) is securing [isolation and quarantine](#) facilities in other cities throughout Whatcom County.

The top objectives for (WUC) are to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and to provide for the most vulnerable members of the community.

WUC is working to prepare [isolation and quarantine](#) facilities for those who cannot safely self-isolate or self-quarantine in their home. For most people, isolating or quarantining at home is the best option, but in some cases, such as sick family members who live with elderly parents, it's not possible to separate from others at home. WUC is planning for such facilities in case they are needed.

Isolation is for people who are actively experiencing symptoms of the virus but do not require hospitalization. Quarantine is for healthy individuals who have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 but are not currently showing symptoms.

"The intent is to have location options at population centers around the county," said John Wolpers, WUC Incident Commander. "Having an isolation and quarantine facility nearby – for someone who lives outside Bellingham – means a place to safely maintain distance while awaiting COVID-19 test results or recovering.

"We want the transition to be easy and safe for those needing this option," said Wolpers.

Motels or hotels are among the preferred options, depending on what is available in each city or community, as they provide direct entry, a private bathroom and bed. These facilities will enable isolation or quarantine up to 14 days.

On April 6, a contract was signed with owners of a motel on Byron Avenue in Bellingham for use of the motel as an isolation and quarantine facility. The Bellingham-based facility is currently being prepared to function as an isolation and quarantine center. Plans are to open this facility sometime after April 12.

Those who wish to donate to this effort or the broader unified COVID-19 response should contact WUC_Donations@co.whatcom.wa.us

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