



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 18, 2020

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Whatcom County Health Department Identifies Two New Cases of COVID-19

BELLINGHAM, WA – As of today, there are a total of seven (7) confirmed cases of [2019 novel coronavirus](#) (COVID-19) in Whatcom County. This includes two new confirmed cases identified by the Whatcom County Health Department on March 17.

One new case is a male in his 50s. The second new case is a male in his teens. One case is a known close contact of a lab-confirmed case. The disease investigation for the other case is currently ongoing. We are collaborating with the Lummi Public Health Department on these disease investigations as we do for all investigations that also fall under tribal jurisdiction.

With a growing number of cases in Whatcom County that aren't linked directly to a known source, it is clear that there is community spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. This indicates the risk to the general public is increasing. The Whatcom County Health Department will no longer be reporting specific locations of public exposures to confirmed cases of COVID-19 because any public location could potentially be a site for exposure to the virus.

"It's important for everyone to realize that the social distancing actions required by the Governor, and the further recommendations from our Whatcom County Health Officer, are a vitally important part of our defense against the spread of COVID-19," said Cindy Hollinsworth, Communicable Disease and Epidemiology Manager for the health department. "It is essential that people wash their hands frequently, limit the size of gatherings to less than 10 people, and stay home if they have any symptoms of a respiratory illness because these are such important steps for controlling this outbreak."

Local and regional case and contact investigations indicate that people are being infected without contact to a known case and in people without a travel history. This tells us that there are far more underlying cases in the community than the known confirmed cases reported on our website daily.

For more information about COVID-19 visit the [Washington State Department of Health website](#) and the [Whatcom County Health Department website](#).

Questions for WCHD can also be emailed to covid@co.whatcom.wa.us

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