



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 12, 2020

Media contact: Amy Cloud, Public Information Officer

Phone: (360) 318-4356

E-mail address: WUC_JIC@co.whatcom.wa.us

Local COVID-19 cases surging, Health Director advises action

BELLINGHAM, WA- COVID-19 cases are surging in Whatcom County. Today's reported [case numbers](#), which include cases not reported over the Veterans Day holiday Nov. 11, indicate a significant increase. This surge is in line with international, national, state, and other county trends.

In response, and in alignment with the State Department of Health, Whatcom County Health Director Erika Lautenbach is calling for action.

"This surge is serious," said Lautenbach. "It is concerning not just to those who are sick or have been exposed, our entire community is at a stress point."

Whatcom County Health Department staff contact every person confirmed to have COVID-19, as well as those they have been in contact with, as part of Case and Contact Investigations (CCI). The CCI interviews indicate:

- Local cases are increasing dramatically;
- The surge is largely the result of in-person social gatherings or within households;
- A full one-third of new infections in October were exposed while outside Whatcom County and; and
- This surge is having a significant impact on our workers, businesses, and organizations.

To mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and to protect the community, the capacity of the isolation and quarantine facility and community's sole hospital, and the ability for public health staff to manage the response, Lautenbach advises immediate action.

"This is reality: we *must wear masks when around others*, and we *must limit social gatherings*, including small ones inside our own homes," said Lautenbach. "It is vital to slowing the spread of this coronavirus before it overwhelms our community. We can't afford to go back to businesses being closed, people being laid off, and permanent closures."

For more information, including guidance on how to be as safe as possible, visit www.whatcomcounty.us/covid, whatcomcovid.com or phone (360) 778-6100.

###