

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 3/15/2020

TO: Grant County healthcare providers, infection control staff, supervisory nursing staff, clinic management, school nurses.
Grant County Emergency Management
Grant County Media

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT

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Grant County Now Has THREE Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 Additional cases likely.

Grant County, WA - GCHD was notified of a third positive test result of COVID-19 in our county. The third patient, who has not been linked to the other cases, was the probable case reported on Friday that additional testing was needed. This patient, a male in his 40's, who had foreign travel prior to his illness and is a priest with the Catholic Church in Mattawa, WA. He is still hospitalized.

Staff are working closely with the Yakima Diocese to identify additional close contacts and asking those individuals to stay home on self-quarantine for 14 days from their last exposure. A letter with times and locations of when the priest conducted mass and other meetings/gathers will be shared with the parish members. The Yakima Diocese will be doing a media release.

On Friday GCHD send guidelines to our faith community. We continue to strongly advises our communities of faith to make most urgent steps toward protecting our vulnerable in a unified and coordinated way. It is time to protect our communities by distancing from each other even when worshipping, which could be a challenge but also is a unique opportunity to bring us together.

Any gatherings or contacts within 6 feet outside of our home and non-essential to life should not be occurring. It is our collective wisdom to recognize that early, persistent and consistent distancing and hygiene interventions will make a difference and will save lives.

We are urging the public to do their part to help minimize the spread of COVID-19 by doing the following:

High Risk People: People at higher risk of severe illness should stay home and away from large groups of people as much as possible, including public places with a lot of people and large gatherings where there will be close contact with others. People at higher risk include:

- People 60 and older
- People with underlying health conditions including heart disease, respiratory illness and diabetes
- People who have weakened immune systems

- People who are pregnant

Workplace: Workplaces should enact measures that allow people who can work from home to do so. Taking these measures can help reduce the number of workers who come into contact with COVID-19 and help minimize absenteeism due to illness.

Employers should consider continued compensation when possible, along with all other measures to sustain those temporarily laid off. We urge all community groups – including social service organizations, faith-based organizations, schools and PTOs, and others – to take the initiative right now to organize efforts to sustain high risk and laid-off people with whom you are associated, with food and household supplies.

Financial institutions should implement all possible policies easing debt, mortgage deadlines, and related obligations for the duration of this pandemic

Events: If you can feasibly **avoid bringing groups of 20 or more people together**, consider postponing events and gatherings. This recommendation is for both private and public events. **Gatherings of 250 people or more are prohibited** for the time being under the Governor’s Executive Order.

If you can’t avoid bringing groups of people together:

- Urge anyone who is sick to not attend.
- Encourage those who are at higher risk for coronavirus to not attend.
- Try to find ways to give people more physical space so that they aren’t in close contact as much as possible.
- Encourage attendees to maintain good healthy habits, such as frequent hand washing.
- Clean surfaces frequently. Standard cleaning products are effective against COVID-19.

Ticketholders of fundraising events that have been cancelled due to COVID-19, please consider donation of the cost of your ticket, as opposed to requesting a refund, as many non-profit organizations rely on these funds for charitable causes.

Schools: GCHD supports the Governor’s executive order to close schools.

Healthcare and Long-Term Care (Nursing homes): Generally, avoid medical settings unless necessary. Healthcare facilities are overwhelmed. If you are feeling sick call your doctor’s office first before going in.

Even if you are not ill, avoid visiting hospitals, long term care facilities or nursing homes to the extent possible. If you do need to visit one of these facilities limit your time there and keep 6 feet away from other patients.

Do not go to the emergency room unless essential. Emergency rooms need to be able to serve those with the most critical needs. If you have symptoms like cough, fever, or other respiratory problems, contact your regular doctor first.

Everybody Can Do Something! Every person can make a difference by doing the following:

- Avoid going out if you feel sick.
 - Wash hands often and vigorously with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water is not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, saturating the skin surface and rubbing for at least 20 seconds.
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- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick and avoid close contact (less than 6 feet away) with others.
- If you have a cold or cough and need to see a provider, always call first to be sure they know you are coming so their staff can take appropriate precautions.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Don't shake hands, bump elbows.
- Use sanitizing wipes or solutions (normal household products work) on frequently touched surfaces and objects at home and at work.
- Take good care of yourself to stay healthy, including adequate sleep and good nutrition.

“We would like to thank all of our staff, healthcare partners, Grant County Sheriff's Emergency Management Division, volunteers, and the community for your amazing cooperation. I know you are having to make tough choices that are impacting your way of life. We are all in this together and it takes a dedicated team like you to slow the spread of this virus in our community,” Theresa Adkinson GCHD Administrator.

Additional Resources:

Washington Department of Health: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

COVID-19 FAQ: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/NovelCoronavirusFactSheet.pdf>

GCHD: <http://granthealth.org/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/>

Consultation:

- **Healthcare Consultation:**

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