

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 9/9/2020

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 COVID-19 Updates

16th & 17th COVID-19 Death Reported to GCHD

GCHD is Working with Royal School District to Investigate 5 COVID-19 Cases Associated with School District

16th Death Reported to GCHD

Grant County, WA – Grant County Health District (GCHD) is reporting the 16th and 17th deaths associated with severe complications due to COVID-19 infection in a Grant County resident. The 16th case was a male Quincy resident in his 80s who died while hospitalized. The resident had underlying conditions putting him at higher risk for severe complications of COVID-19. The 17th case was a male Quincy resident in his 30s who died while hospitalized. The resident had no known underlying conditions. These deaths bring the total Grant County COVID-19 related deaths to 17.

GCHD recognizes each COVID-19 death impacts families, friends, and communities. We would like to express our sincere condolences on behalf of our staff, Grant County Health Officer, and Board of Health, we are so sorry for your loss.

Royal City School District COVID-19 Cases

On August 28, 2020 Royal School District (RSD) started the new school year with alternating days on campus and remote learning schedules as well as a 100% remote learning option. RSD is actively working with GCHD to investigate and contact trace four (5) COVID-19 cases: one (1) staff member and four (4) students from Red Rock Elementary, Intermediate School, and Middle School. If a child or other staff member had close contact with a person who tested positive, they will be contacted directly with instructions about monitoring symptoms, quarantining, and testing. At this point into the investigations, it is too early to assess whether there was any additional spread at schools.

The Washington State Department of Health and GCHD identifies a close contact as, “living with an individual who is positive for COVID-19, coming in contact with respiratory secretions of an infected individual (coughed/sneezed on, shared glasses/food/personal items), having physical contact with an infected individual, or being generally within 6 feet of an infected individual for more than 15 minutes.”

For now, the schools in Royal City remain open based on the local school board decision to offer some form of in-person learning, but given the rate of COVID in Grant County, there is a continued risk for COVID spread on campus. GCHD alongside the school district staff continues to look for any additional cases and any evidence of school-based spread or school outbreaks. The decision to close the schools will be based on finding spread or outbreaks on school premises or on the buses. GCHD would like to thank RSD staff and leadership for their continued partnership and dedication to contact tracing.

As previously presented to our community, DOH and our region's health officers do not support full in-person education until the rate of COVID-19 drops below 75 /100,000 /14 days. As Grant County school districts and private schools bring some students who are unable to learn remotely for on-campus learning (based on their individualized plans), GCHD wants to remind everyone about continued dedication to written COVID safety plans, which should include:

As previously presented to our community, DOH and our region's health officers do not support full in-person education until the rate of COVID-19 drops below 75 /100,000 /14 days. As Grant County school districts and private schools bring students on campus, including those who are unable to learn remotely (based on their individualized plans), GCHD wants to remind everyone they should be dedicated to their written COVID safety plans, which should include:

- Daily COVID-19 **symptom checks**.
- **Excluding** students or staff who are symptomatic.
- **Cohorting** of students and no interactions with other student groups.
- **Proper use of face coverings of all students and staff.** No person should be on campus without a proper mask unless eating, drinking or have a waiver issued by their healthcare provider and Grant County Health Officer.
- **Maintain social distancing at all time.** Masks should not be a replacement for maintaining social distancing during the school day.
- **Frequent hand washing** and hand sanitizer available.
- **Adherence to home isolation and quarantine.** Students and staff who have been identified as a close contact of a COVID-19 case should never attend school during their isolation or quarantine time.

For the health of your community, family, neighbors, and friends, it is critical to wear a face covering and limit the size of your gatherings. **Each personal decision we make to socialize outside of our households may impact our most vulnerable residents. Please mask up and protect one another. Our community, schools, and businesses are relying on you to help slow the spread of the virus in Grant County.**

For detailed information on Grant County COVID-19 related statistics, visit www.granthealth.org.

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