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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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Ten Additional Grant County Resident Deaths Associated with COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2); COVID-19 Vaccine Update

Grant County, WA – Grant County Health District is reporting ten (10) additional confirmed COVID-19 associated deaths of Grant County residents. These deaths bring the total Grant County confirmed COVID-19 related deaths to eighty-three (83).

Seven (7) deaths were associated with Long Term Care Facilities (LTC) outbreaks reported previously in November and all these residents had underlying conditions putting them at higher risk for severe complications due to a COVID-19 infection:

- McKay Healthcare & Rehab Center, Soap Lake (16 total deaths with no additional deaths pending death certificate review)
 - Male in his 50s
 - Two females in their 80s
 - Two females in their 90s
- Lake Ridge Center, Moses Lake (17 total deaths during this outbreak with 1 additional death pending death certificate review)
 - Male in his 80s
- Columbia Crest Center, Moses Lake (10 total deaths with 2 additional deaths pending death certificate review)
 - Male in his 70s

We are also reporting three (3) deaths not associated with an LTC. All three were male Moses Lake residents in their 60s with underlying conditions putting them at higher risk of severe complications due to a COVID-19 infection.

Grant County Health District grieves the loss of these community members. Our hearts are with their family and friends. On behalf of our staff, Grant County Health Officer, and Board of Health, we are so sorry for your loss.

Grant County Health District delays the announcement of COVID-19 associated deaths to give families time to notify their loved ones. We also verify COVID-19 is listed as a cause of death on the death certificate to ensure we are not reporting deaths that are not attributed to COVID-19. All reported deaths of Grant County residents are attributed to COVID-19 and were verified with the death certificate, testing, and other case information.

We need everyone to do their part to slow the spread and flatten the curve to ensure our healthcare facilities are not overwhelmed. **Each personal decision we make will impact our most vulnerable residents.** Our most vulnerable community members — elderly, immunocompromised, and those with chronic conditions — are especially at risk of complications due to a COVID-19 infection and we must continue to take measures to protect them from this disease.

Your choice to gather with those outside your household could lead to additional cases of COVID-19 and even death. Please protect those you love, by staying home, especially if you feel sick or have been asked to quarantine or isolate. Everyone can do their part to protect one another and limit the spread of illness in our communities:

- Wear a face covering anytime you are in public or around people you do not live with.
- Stay home if you feel sick, are under quarantine or isolation orders, or have been told you are a close contact to a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Use physical distancing and stay 6 feet away from others as much as possible when you are in public or at work.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially before eating or coming home. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- If you do choose to get together for things like holiday parties, birthdays, and other get-togethers, have them outside and limit them to no more than 5 people outside your household.

COVID-19 Vaccine Update

A vaccine is the most effective tool available to combat the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Four healthcare facilities in Grant County have been approved to administer COVID-19 vaccine with one facility receiving Pfizer vaccine, which requires ultra-cold holding storage (-112°F to -76°F), and the other three facilities receiving the Moderna vaccine which does not require ultra-cold holding storage.

COVID-19 vaccinations in Grant County began on Thursday, December 17th with nearly 200 healthcare workers and first responders receiving vaccinations in the first 2 days of offering the vaccine. There have been approximately 470 vaccines given since it first arrived in Grant County.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 vaccine supply is limited. The Washington State Department of Health sets the prioritization and rollout of COVID-19 vaccine for Washington State. Currently, only people that qualify under Phase 1A may be given a COVID-19 vaccine. The goal of Phase 1A is to protect those at highest risk of exposure who are needed to maintain a functioning healthcare system and to protect highly vulnerable populations. This phase includes:

- High-risk workers in health care settings such as doctors and nurses,
- High-risk first responders such as EMS, and
- Residents and staff of nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other community-based, congregate living settings where most residents are over the age of 65.

The “Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care program”, a partnership with CVS and Walgreens, was created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to offer on-site COVID-19 vaccinations to residents and staff of long-term care facilities. Most nursing homes, assisted living, and other community-based, congregate living facilities in Grant County will be receiving vaccinations through this federal program. Vaccinations under the program started being administered in Washington state this week.

“We are hopeful the next tier of vaccination priority will be finalized and released soon so more Grant County residents will be able to get vaccinated,” says Theresa Adkinson, District Administrator.

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

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