

KITTITAS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
DAILY VIDEO UPDATE
Tuesday, August 11, 2020

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Good afternoon. It's Dr. Larson to talk about COVID-19.

Today, I want to talk about what is currently happening in Kittitas County, about our behavior, and about our school situation.

The current situation at the nursing home and long-term care facilities appears to be getting better. We have tested the last two weeks and have not had any more positives.

At Prestige, they're starting to move the people who have recovered from COVID-19 separate from those that still have the disease. One wing of the building will house COVID-19 residents and the other two wings will house people who have recovered. That's a very positive thing. We still have a long ways to go before they can accept new patients into that facility, due to DSHS regulations, but they are working hard there.

They are also working hard at Pacifica. We did some testing last week and had no new positive staff or residents.

We will be retesting both of those facilities on Thursday of this week.

We did have one more death at Prestige, secondary to COVID-19, last Sunday, so that puts Kittitas County at 20 deaths.

When it comes to behavior toward each other, my ask is for everyone to be kind. Realize that everyone is having a hard time, everyone is trying to make decisions with love and caring, and it's a situation where everyone has been under stress since March.

Sometimes we don't make the right decisions. Sometimes we want to change the decisions we made, but can't. Showing a little bit of kindness to everyone helps us all move forward. Give grace to people who say something to you in a short tone, or who make a decision you might not make.

We as a county can move forward, which would allow things like schools to open. To do move that direction, we have to be

willing to say, "I *could* have a backyard barbecue, but should I?"

We are still at groups of 10 with get togethers. That means if you have a backyard barbecue, there should be 10 people or fewer there, and you should still wear masks and social distance (unless all those people are in your family bubble). Otherwise, your visitors go out and share with others. The restrictions on behavior have been loosened, but again, that doesn't mean we have to do those things.

Those with a higher risk of the disease should still be staying home, staying in their small bubble.

Idaho is currently a significant hot spot. I recommend *not* traveling there to play basketball or baseball. I talked with someone the other day who wanted to go to a graduation ceremony in Idaho. I said I wouldn't go, and if they *really* had to go, they should maintain social distancing and wear a mask -- even if no one else is wearing a mask.

That brings us to schools in the fall. As mentioned last week, some guidelines from the Governor came out regarding school openings, using the red light, yellow light, and green light analogy.

Red light is when there are greater than 75 cases per 100,000 for 14 days. The recommendation is for schools to not be open.

Yellow light is when there are between 25 and 75 cases per 100,000 for 14 days. That means schools can proceed with caution. They need to have all their ducks in a row when it comes to managing sick kids, and separating kids (using pods, separate classrooms, having lunch in the classroom, etc.).

Green light is when there are fewer than 25 cases per 100,000 for 14 days. You can open, but the precautions still have to be in place.

Kittitas County is currently at about 90 cases per 100,000 for 14 days. Because of recent outbreaks in a variety of venues, we are still seeing 6-7 positive cases a day. It's unlikely we'll be below 75 cases per 100,000 by the time school starts.

Thorp, Damman and Kittitas schools are all making hard decisions this week in regard to their schools.

CWU is looking at these things as well. The numbers mentioned

above don't apply to post-high school education, but CWU is considering them when it comes to safe reopening. They have the issues with group get togethers and young people being out and about.

We need to encourage people to wear masks, to social distance, to not have big get togethers, etc. We really want school to reopen safely.

There's no argument that the best place for kids to be for their mental and physical health, and for their education , is in school. The teachers really want the kids to be in school, but we have to do it safely.

And that means we need to stay home. We need to realize that things are not normal and will not be normal for quite some time. If there's something we can cancel (a 50th birthday party, for example), we should, or there should be no more than 10 people there, and we should still maintain social distancing.

Remember to be kind. Remember that every single person is having a hard time. Don't say something negative against someone else on social media. Those things hurt and people hold that type of thing for a long time. Being kind will carry you along ways.

Thanks a lot. We'll talk to you later.

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