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Klickitat County Public Health

Contact: Erinn Quinn

Director for Klickitat County Health Department

www.klickitatcounty.org



2 DEATHS, 20 HOSPITALIZATIONS AND A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN COVID-19 CASES IN KLICKITAT COUNTY

KCHD Urges Community Members to Use Precautions this Holiday Weekend

Goldendale, WA, September 3, 2021 - This August Klickitat County Health Department (KCHD) has recorded an all time high in confirmed COVID-19 cases. The 337 confirmed cases in August are more than all of the total cases combined from March until July. Of the 337 cases, 134 are still active and waiting to recover. In the last month, two of our residents have died of COVID-19 and 20 have been hospitalized. All of the Klickitat County residents that have either died or been hospitalized were unvaccinated. As the number of COVID-19 cases increase across the Pacific Northwest, the demand for acute care and intensive care hospital beds also increases as COVID-19 patients fill the larger as well as the rural healthcare centers.

"I recently had a patient who was quite ill and needed urgent surgery. She had to stay in the ER for most of the day before we could find a surgical hospital bed for her due to the hospitals all being full in the Pacific Northwest. The delay in transportation to a hospital that could perform the surgery may have resulted in a worse outcome," stated Dr. Jeffrey Tanita, MD from Klickitat Valley Health.

It is for these reasons that KCHD urges Klickitat County residents to avoid risky behavior during the Labor Day holiday weekend in order to support their local healthcare clinics and hospitals. The more beds that are taken up by COVID-19 patients means less care for those who seek care for other critical medical conditions including car accidents, cardiac arrest, and other medical emergencies.

"In the past, we have always been able to transfer a patient in septic shock to a hospital that can provide definitive ICU care. Now, hospitals across the entire Northwest are strained beyond capacity due to high numbers of COVID infected patients, and also because of staffing shortages due to COVID infections. After personally caring for this patient, with the help of other KVH staff, this patient was successfully transferred to a large hospital ICU after being at KVH for about 24 hours. Care of this patient required enormous consumption of KVH staff, medications, and equipment. While this care package was adequate to preserve the patient's life, it was far less than the patient needed. KVH does not possess the staff nor the equipment to care for a critically

ill patient," stated Peter Andress, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) from Klickitat County Health.

Jenna Newcomb, PA-C, a Provider at Skyline Hospital stated that "There is a critical staffing and bed shortage in the region and it is affecting the ability of healthcare providers to care for all of the residents. From the emergency department and primary care perspectives they are doing everything they can to take care of emergent, urgent and routine needs. With respect to COVID-19, we are seeing a large surge in critically ill patients, most of whom are unvaccinated and are now facing unprecedented delays in transferring to higher levels of care. For those with heart attacks, strokes, and trauma, local hospitals can still assess and stabilize residents but transfers may be delayed because there is a critical staff and bed shortage at all of the facilities that Klickitat County hospitals transfer to regularly. Routine care is also being delayed due to staff and bed shortages." On Wednesday, September 1st, Newcomb spoke to the Washington State Lieutenant Governor Denny Heck regarding the above concerns and requested help for our community.

At this time the best way to help your community and support your healthcare providers is to get vaccinated. If you have any questions or concerns about vaccination, contact your primary care provider or KCHD. Vaccinations are readily available for anyone 12 and older at a variety of locations within Klickitat County. Most vaccines are available by appointment only and can be booked by calling Skyline Health, Klickitat Valley Health, NorthShore Medical, or Klickitat County Health Department. If you would like to book your vaccination with KCPH, click here to schedule: <https://us1.quickscreen.health/klickitat-county-vaccination#/screening> - there are weekly vaccination clinics on Tuesdays (Goldendale office) and Thursdays (White Salmon).

You can also help slow the spread of COVID-19 by wearing a face mask that covers your nose and mouth when you are in public (especially in indoor spaces), washing your hands, and staying home when you are sick.

If you are currently experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, please contact your primary care provider about getting tested. COVID-19 symptoms can be different for everyone but generally include some of the following: fever, chills, headache, muscle aches or pains, sore throat, sinus congestion, dry or productive cough, shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain or cramps, loss of smell or taste, and fatigue. Anyone with symptoms can be tested in Klickitat County by calling to make an appointment at Klickitat Valley Health, Skyline Health, or Northshore Medical Group.

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About Klickitat County Public Health

Klickitat County Public Health is always working for a safer and healthier community. As the region's public health leader and partner, we are committed to excellence through innovative programs, community partnerships and a fundamental dedication to promote and protect the health of all Klickitat County residents.

For More Information:

Klickitat County Public Health: www.klickitatcounty.org/289/Public-Health

Klickitat Valley Health: www.kvhealth.net

Skyline Health: www.myskylinehealth.org

Northshore Medical Group: www.northshore-medical.com

COVID-19 Risk Assessment Dashboard:

<https://coronavirus.wa.gov/what-you-need-know/covid-19-risk-assessment-dashboard>