



Skagit County Public Health

Jennifer Johnson, Director
Howard Leibrand, M.D., Health Officer

MEMO

To: Skagit County School Superintendents and Administrators

From: Howard Leibrand, MD, Skagit County Health Officer

RE: Local and regional COVID-19 disease activity

Date: November 19, 2020

For the past four weeks, Skagit County has experienced an exponential rise in the number of laboratory confirmed new COVID-19 cases. Our disease activity is in the HIGH category, defined by Washington State Department of Health as >75 cases per 100,000 population averaged over 14 days. Skagit County's disease activity exceeded 250 cases per 100,000 population for the two weeks ending November 16. This significant surge in fall case levels is occurring throughout Washington and around the country. Recent orders from the Governor are designed to slow the rise in cases and may have a positive impact, but surges of this magnitude are difficult to contain quickly. We are likely to experience very high disease activity levels into December and possibly beyond.

At this time, we have not seen evidence of school-based outbreaks associated with in person learning in Skagit County. However, schools and districts may be experiencing significant impacts to staffing and student attendance from the increasing numbers of people being directed to isolate and quarantine according to CDC, state, and local guidance. Schools must maintain their capacity to trace contacts in the event of a school associated exposure to a case of COVID-19. In addition, the requirements of the Washington State Department of Health K-12 Fall Guidance for In Person Learning result in ongoing stress upon district resources.

We recognize that you will continue to evaluate the best decisions for your students and staff. Each district or private school will need to base these decisions according to current and near future disease activity impacts as well as resources available for staffing of student and district services. We support you in your on-going evaluation of the feasibility of providing in person learning given our current and near term projected very high disease activity level.

Thanks to you and your staff for your on-going diligent work to provide safe and effective learning during these extremely challenging times. Please continue to direct your questions to our response team.

SKAGIT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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