



## MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Pierce County Public Health Sees a Doubling of Positive Cases in a Week-Urges Caution**

Pierce County went from 14 confirmed positive COVID-19 cases on May 14th to 29 cases on May 20th, and numbers continue to increase. The county reported 44 confirmed cases today. At the same time, many individuals have returned to work, businesses have reopened, and families have attempted to resume normal summer activities.

“A doubling of positive cases in a week is very concerning, as this is an indicator that a spike is occurring,” AZ Snyder, Health Officer stated. “We did anticipate an increase of positive cases as testing capacity increased, but this increase was much greater than expected in such a short period of time. As a community, we must hold fast to public health recommendations to prevent this spike from developing into a surge of cases,” said Snyder.

In addition to the doubling of cases, Public Health has also noted a sharp rise in the number of close contacts reported by cases; many of whom require follow-up. “If this pattern continues, Public Health’s capacity will quickly become strained, and we may not be able to reach out as quickly to people who were in close contact to positive cases. Delayed notification of contacts hinders our ability to contain the spread of COVID-19,” said Snyder.

Pierce County Public Health urges the community to continue following recommendations issued in an [advisory on May 15<sup>th</sup>](#), which remains in place. The recommendations include:

- Limiting gatherings to 10 or less people
- Supporting local businesses in adopting practices to safeguard their staff and customers
- Advising against travel outside of the community

“In addition to using these guidelines to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our community, we want families to feel empowered to make educated decisions about what activities they should participate in this summer,” said Snyder.

Snyder said that there are three main factors families should consider when assessing exposure risks associated with different activities and the potential they have to harm our communities.

#### TALK TO US

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To promote healthy behaviors, prevent disease and injury, and protect against environmental hazards



- 1) **Time** – *How long will you be doing the activity involving close contact with others?* As the time spent around people who may be infectious increases, infection becomes more likely. People who are infectious may not visibly show symptoms.
- 2) **Number of people** – *How many people are participating in the activity?* The more people an individual comes in contact with, the greater the risk of exposure to someone with COVID-19. Large gatherings also present a challenge for public health to quickly identify and contact those that may have been exposed.
- 3) **Proximity to others** – *Are you able to maintain physical distancing from people who are not members of your household?* Activities like contact sports or indoor gatherings with limited space make it very difficult for people to consistently maintain at least 6 feet of distance, even if they are trying to do so.

In addition to these factors, personal risk depends on age and health, and the precautions people take during any activity.

“Being thoughtful about these key risk factors for our summer activities will help Pierce County residents protect ourselves, our families, and our communities,” said Snyder.



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