

## **KPTZ Update on COVID-19 and Jefferson County ~ 3/09/20**

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Jefferson County was reported on March 6. Jefferson County's Public Health Department has determined that this case was contracted in Kirkland, so there is as of yet no evidence of community spread of the disease in Jefferson County. Test results for two other Jefferson County cases are pending. But the Seattle area continues to see additional cases, the death toll is climbing, and the disease is spreading to many other states.

At the local level, the capacity to conduct testing has been very limited, but is now increasing, with recent FDA permission for testing to be carried out not only by the State Health Lab but also by other facilities such as the University of Washington and private labs.

Evaluations and testing of City and County residents and visitors presenting with respiratory symptoms will be conducted at the new dedicated Respiratory Evaluation Station, rather than at the Emergency Room or in other clinics, to avoid potential contamination of vulnerable populations.

The Jefferson Department of Emergency Management has activated its Emergency Operations Center to respond to COVID-19. The different agencies that are called upon to manage situations such as this (first responders, County, City, Healthcare, etc.) will begin meeting on Monday to discuss, plan, and implement appropriate actions.

Early statistics indicate the death rate for patients over the age of 60 has been double that of younger patients. The Center for Disease Control advises, "Stay away from people who are ill, especially if you are 60 and older or have underlying health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, or a weakened immune system." This is particularly relevant given the mean age of Jefferson County residents.

Jefferson County Public Health (JCPH) and Jefferson Healthcare (JHC) make these recommendations for our community:

- Do not go to the hospital or to other medical facilities if you suspect that you might have the virus. Instead, call the Jefferson Healthcare (JHC) Nurse Consult Line at 360-344-3094. They will tell you what to do and where to go for testing, should it be necessary.
- Stay home if you are sick. Don't go to school or work.
- Practice personal hygiene so you don't spread the virus. This means washing your hands often and thoroughly.

- Protect yourself from contact with sick people, especially if you are not young and healthy.
- Stay informed. Look for updates on this website, or the following: [Jefferson Public Health](#), [Washington State Department of Health](#), or [Public Health-Seattle King County](#).

NOTE: Jefferson Healthcare will accept all federal, state and commercial insurance reimbursement made available for these services but will not seek any additional payment or co-payments from patients related to the services at the Respiratory Evaluation Station.