

KPTZ Update on COVID-19 and Jefferson County ~ 3/7/20

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Jefferson County was reported on Friday, March 6. Test results for two local cases are pending. The Seattle area continues to see additional cases, as the disease is spreading to many other states.

On Friday, the Jefferson County Department of Emergency Management activated its Emergency Operations Center to respond to COVID-19. The various agencies called upon to manage situations such as this (first responders, County, City, Healthcare, etc.) will begin meeting Monday, March 9 to discuss, plan, and implement appropriate actions.

At this time, anyone presenting with respiratory symptoms will be seen at the satellite clinic (Jefferson Healthcare's *Respiratory Evaluation Station*), rather than at the hospital emergency room or other local clinics. Medical personnel there will screen patients for COVID-19 by collecting a sample with a nasal swab and sending it to the state lab for analysis.

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.
- Protect yourself from contact with sick people, especially if you are not young and healthy.
- Stay informed. Look for updates on this website, also Jefferson Public Health
- (Jeffersoncountypublichealth.org), Washington State Department of Health (doh.wa.gov), and Public Health-Seattle King County (kingcounty.gov/COVID).

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.