

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, March 16, 2021.

After eleven days of no new instances of COVID-19, a male in his 20s was reported as the 337th case of the virus on Monday. Sixty two people are awaiting test results.

Jefferson County will hold its first mass vaccination event this Sunday, March 21, at the Chimacum High School, to deliver 300 first doses of the Moderna vaccine. The county is hoping to conduct these events on a weekly basis, as long as the vaccine supply holds out, a trend that is expected to continue.

The lines are now open for appointments, with information about signups available on the County Facebook page, on the public health web page (<https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1466/Case-Information>), as well as other social media sources. We'll tell you the contact number shortly.

The event will accommodate everyone eligible under the current tiered priority lists. In addition to those age 65 and up, this includes workers in agriculture, food processing, grocery stores, public transit, firefighters, and law enforcement, as well as workers in corrections, prisons, jails, or detention centers.

Also qualifying are people over 16 years old who are pregnant or who have a disability that puts them at high risk. Examples include those with Down's syndrome, a developmental disability, intellectual disability, or are deaf/hard of hearing, blind/low-vision, and whose disability or an underlying medical condition increases their risk for severe outcome per the CDC's list of the conditions that put people at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. If this is confusing, check in at findyourphase.wa to determine your qualifications before booking an appointment, either through the Department of Emergency Management or Jefferson Healthcare. Also know that some of these qualifications won't go into effect until tomorrow, March 17.

The Chimacum vaccination event is independent of Jefferson Healthcare, although the hospital will share some of its vaccine supply. Jefferson Healthcare will continue its vaccinations throughout the weekend at a location adjacent to Manresa Castle. To book an appointment at the mass event call 360-344-9791. To book at Jefferson Healthcare select the blue "It's My Turn" button on the hospital's website (<https://jeffersonhealthcare.org/covid-19-vaccine/>).

Volunteers are also needed to help with Sunday's event. Most needed are those with medical experience who can actually put the shots in arms, according to DEM director Willie Bence. This requires a medical license in Washington, either active or inactive. Those without medical training can't vaccinate people but can help with other tasks. To volunteer send an email to jcdem@co.jefferson.wa.us.

With 11% of Jefferson County residents now fully vaccinated, they need to be aware of the CDC's suggested post-vaccination behavior. Two weeks after a second dose, people can gather indoors with fully vaccinated people in private residences without wearing a mask and gather indoors with unvaccinated people from one other household in private residences without masks, unless any of those people or anyone they live with has an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Regardless of vaccination status, people should still protect themselves and others while in public settings. This includes wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet from others, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces. Our ability to remain in Phase 3 as a county will be evaluated every three weeks starting April 12. A county our size will need to continue to have fewer than 30 cases over a two-week period and fewer than three new COVID-19 hospitalizations over a one-week period.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday and at 5pm Monday through Thursday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org.

This is Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.