

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Jim Burke, with local news for April 12, 2022.

Dr. Alison Berry and Willie Bence were on hand yesterday at the Board of County Commissioners meeting. Dr. Berry has her voice back, and the reason there was no briefing last week was she had no voice at all. She does NOT have COVID-19; she has a virus, and has had a rough season because she has a toddler at home.

The two-week COVID-19 case rate in Jefferson County is 168 per hundred thousand. We are still at the MODERATE level. The County and the CDC are recommending, but not requiring, that we wear masks in indoor public spaces when the case rate is at this level. No one is hospitalized and there have been 3,246 cases since the pandemic began. We have lost 28 of our fellow citizens to COVID-19 in Jefferson County since the beginning of the pandemic.

In Clallam County, the two-week case rate is also MODERATE, and has eased slightly to 139 per hundred thousand. There have been 11,089 cases, and currently 3 people are hospitalized, and we have lost 111 citizens to COVID-19 in Clallam County since the pandemic began.

Dr. Berry said that, nationwide, the case rates are somewhat stable, but there is an upward trend in the northeast. And we are starting to see a rise here in Washington along the I-5 corridor, King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties. The rate there is now 400 cases per hundred thousand which puts them in the high category. Reporting is more accurate in that area, and she said the lower numbers we've seen generally might be due to a transition to home testing that gets underreported. She said, as much as they can, that in Jefferson and Clallam Counties they are including those numbers, so if you take a test, especially if it's positive be sure to report it to the county health department (at <https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1429/COVID-19>).

The additional booster shot, she said, is a reasonable and safe choice, but might not be necessary for everyone over 50. If you are older, have other health issues, it's a good idea. She stressed that anyone who has not received a third shot (the first booster) that it is a good idea to get one. The BA-2 variant, which now accounts for 75% of the positive cases in Washington, is more contagious than BA-1 or what's commonly referred to as omicron, but not as severe an illness as DELTA. As an example, she said, if one person in a room of 20 people has COVID-19, they would infect 2 people if they had the original virus, 5 to 6 people if they have omicron BA-1, and they would infect 10 people if they have the BA-2 variant. So, if you are in a room with twenty people, and one is infected, then you have a 50% chance of getting infected with BA-2.

You can listen to Dr. Allison Berry's full comments to the County commissioners on our website KPTZ.org (<https://kptz.org/2022/04/11/county-public-health-report-4-11-22/>). You can submit your Public Health questions to Dr. Allison Berry and Willie Bence by emailing contactus@kptz.org by this Friday before noon, and your question will be answered at next Monday's BOCC meeting.

The Point Wilson Lighthouse will open to the public this year on Easter weekend. Beginning Saturday, April 16, the lighthouse will be open from 11am to 4pm every Saturday and Sunday through the end of September. Volunteers will provide historical information about the lighthouse, and visitors will be able to climb the tower to see the historic lens that is more than 100 years old.

A worldwide shortage of mariners has resulted in reduced state ferry service and long wait times for customers on multiple routes. Recruiting engine room crews is especially challenging right now and is why Washington State Ferries is looking to increase interest and enrollment at Seattle Maritime Academy. Around one-in-four of current engine room employees graduated from the maritime academy and it's critical to ferry customers and the Puget Sound region that this workforce pipeline continues to flow.

For people interested in a fast track to a family-wage job at WSF, the academy hosts monthly public tours and information sessions on the second Tuesday of each month, with the next occurring at 6pm Tuesday, April 12. Enrollment outreach, as well as ongoing recruitment, encourages people from communities of color, women and other under-represented groups in the maritime industry to consider maritime training and careers.

The Seattle Maritime Academy is part of Seattle Central Community College and the facility is located on the shore of Lake Union in Seattle. Marine engineering students train in classrooms, aboard vessels, and in a state-of-the-art engine room simulator. Washington State Ferries, a division of the Washington State Department of Transportation, is the largest ferry system in the U.S. and safely and efficiently carries tens of millions of people a year through some of the most majestic scenery in the world.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and five Monday through Thursday and at noon on Friday and Saturday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org. This is Jim Burke. Thank you for listening, and have a good Tuesday.