

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Jim Burke, with local news for Wednesday, May 18, 2022.

It was reported yesterday in the *Peninsula Daily News* that, nationwide, the death toll from COVID-19 passed the one million mark over the weekend. Earlier last week the *New York Times* reported that by their calculations we'd crossed that line. Then, a few days later the White House declared that we'd reached that number, and then the Associated Press said we reached one million deaths.

Dr. Allison Berry, the health officer for Clallam and Jefferson counties, said, "It's a great loss to our society. All the people we have lost to COVID-19, and so many of those deaths were preventable...Not all of them were – certainly the early deaths related to COVID-19, before we knew how to treat it and how to prevent it – but so many of the deaths in the last year, we could have prevented."

Berry added that with such a great loss of life, it is likely that everyone knows at least one person who has lost someone to the virus. "We don't always realize that we have neighbors and friends who have lost family and friends to this virus," she said. "It's a good reminder for us to be gentle with each other as we navigate these ongoing surges because you never know what your neighbors are experiencing and who they might have lost."

In Clallam County the case rate is 684 per hundred thousand. That translates to 37 new cases per day. 1 person is hospitalized. There have been 12,150 total confirmed cases, and 112 deaths in Clallam County since the pandemic began.

In Jefferson County, the case rate is 774 per hundred thousand. There are 185 cases in isolation. No one is hospitalized at this time. 28 cases were added yesterday for a total of 3,798 confirmed cases, and there have been 29 deaths since the pandemic began.

Recently, there has been an uptick in demand for Paxlovid, the antiviral treatment for COVID, due to our local case rate and the age of our population. The window for taking it is five days from the onset of symptoms and/or a positive test. The treatment is being prioritized for older patients and those with comorbidities and if you've had a positive test, Jefferson Healthcare asks that you please call the Nurse Consult Hotline (360 344-3094). The nurses will assess you to see if you are eligible for that medication either through a primary care provider or the express clinic. PLEASE CALL AHEAD, and leave a message if need be. The consulting nurses are extremely busy right now. Dr. Berry strongly recommends that regardless of vaccination status, you mask up in public indoor settings, preferably with a well-fitting, high-quality mask: N-95, KN-95 or similar.

Other helpful links:

- Order more home tests (<https://sayyescovidhometest.org/>)
- Testing and quarantine flowchart
<https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/DocumentCenter/View/12518/Testing-Flowchart>)
- You can look at the latest numbers, mask recommendations, and links to report positive COVID test results at the county's websites (<https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1429/COVID-19>) and <https://www.clallam.net/coronavirus/>).

This next item is from a Washington State Department of Ecology News Release. Yesterday, May 17, 2022, Port Townsend mill was fined \$27,000 for water quality violations. Repeated water quality violations at the Port

Townsend Paper Corporation (PTPC) mill in Port Townsend led to a \$27,000 penalty from the Washington Department of Ecology. Pollution above permitted levels can negatively impact the aquatic environment. Between November 2021 and March of 2022, the mill spilled approximately 800 gallons of untreated process wastewater into Port Townsend Bay, and exceeded the pollution discharge levels allowed in their water quality permit 14 times. PTPC's water quality permit requires the mill to treat their wastewater before ultimately discharging it to Port Townsend Bay. Solids and chemicals in process wastewater above permitted levels can harm aquatic life and reduce water quality. According to PTPC, the violations were a result of leaking pipes, equipment failures, and operational challenges caused by freezing weather. Port Townsend Paper Corporation has 30 days to pay the fine or to appeal the penalty to the Pollution Control Hearings Board (<https://elaho.wa.gov/content/11>). Water quality penalty payments are placed into the state's Coastal Protection Fund (<https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Payments-contracts-grants/Grants-loans/Find-a-grant-or-loan/Coastal-protection-fund>), which provides grants to public agencies and tribes for water quality restoration projects. If you would like to know more about the Department of Ecology in our state, go to <https://ecology.wa.gov/>.

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.