

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Wednesday, June 15, 2022.

First, I'd like to say that yesterday due to an editing error on my part, I left out an important part of a story. And that is: KPTZ is thrilled to announce that the station has been named the recipient of a Public Health Hero Award! Yesterday I told our listeners about why (hint: it has to do with connecting the community to up to date information on the COVID-19 pandemic.) The award will be bestowed at Thursday's Jefferson County Board of Health meeting. Chris Bricker will represent KPTZ to receive the award during this virtual meeting. And KUDOS to everyone at KPTZ for earning this award!

Jefferson Healthcare has advised that they've received notifications of unknown entities calling patients and fraudulently posing as Jefferson Healthcare or Medicare employees. The bad actor states that they know the patient has received services at Jefferson Healthcare and attempts to obtain a Social Security Number or other insurance information for billing. Medicare will never call a patient and ask for this information. This bears repeating: Medicare will never call a patient and ask for this information.

Although Jefferson Healthcare staff may call a patient for additional information their teams use two patient identifiers prior to discussing any patient information over the phone. Debra Tesch, Manager of Health Information and Privacy Officer said, "Jefferson Healthcare's highest priority is to protect our patient's medical information. We have placed many safeguards in both our Electronic Medical Records and Staff Education to ensure our patients feel extremely secure that we will protect their medical and financial data when using our services. We want to be sure our community knows about these bad actors as they are focusing their efforts to our most vulnerable, our elderly population." There are no reports of patients providing the solicited information to the bad actors.

Reports indicate these calls are coming from South Africa (but your caller ID won't say that). Anyone receiving calls as described should call the Jefferson Healthcare's Manager of Health Information Management and Privacy Officer, Debra Tesch, at 360-385-2200 extension 2489 (or ask the operator for Debra Tesch).

In both Clallam and Jefferson Counties the COVID-19 case rates are still high. In Jefferson County the two-week case rate is 826 per hundred thousand. No one is currently hospitalized. Total Cases: 4,401. One person died this past week from COVID-19, an elderly patient who was vaccinated, but not boosted. So, now 30 people have died in Jefferson County since the pandemic began. In Clallam County the case rate is 643 per hundred thousand. There have been a total of 13,221 cases since the pandemic began. No one is currently hospitalized, but there have been 3 more deaths since the beginning of last week for a total of 115 deaths due to COVID-19 in Clallam County since the pandemic began.

A causeway that occupied the cut between Indian Island and Marrowstone Island was replaced just two years ago by a bridge, and the return of young salmon to the eelgrass beds of the tidelands below Indian Island's sandstone-stacked bluffs has been swift. Even Bill Kalina, the island's longtime environmental program

manager for the Navy, was taken aback by the jump in the number of juvenile salmon since the causeway was replaced with the bridge at the south end of Kilisut Harbor, the Kitsap *Sun* reported. Kalina said, “We weren’t expecting these results so quickly. It happened almost overnight.” For the past 75 years, the causeway’s two small culverts were the only way saltwater – and the life traveling in it – that traverse Oak Bay north to Kilisut. But in 2020, a \$12.6 million state project replaced the causeway with a concrete girder bridge. Only six juvenile salmon were found during seining in the five years before the bridge opened. During this year’s seining, over two days in May, volunteers netted close to 1,000 juvenile salmon. “The increase was really dramatic,” Kalina said.

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 Wednesday.