

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. I'm Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, May 28, 2024.

This is from the *Washington State Standard*: Candidates in this year's Washington elections must report what they spend on media when using artificial intelligence (AI) and other digital tools, and declare who is paying for their yard signs, under new rules unanimously adopted Thursday by the state Public Disclosure Commission (PDC). The rules dealing with old and new campaigning tools result from recently-enacted laws intended to provide the public with more info on the source and use of money in Washington elections.

A 2023 statute targets the growing use of digital manipulation and AI-generated technology to falsely depict a person's image, speech, or conduct in campaign-related material. Under the law, a person can sue the sponsor of a political ad or mailer if it does not make clear with a disclaimer that it is fake. Rule changes enacted by the PDC require candidates, committees, and sponsors of political advertising to disclose the names of and amounts paid to the vendors involved in creating, producing, and airing the ads, and information on the audience targeted. The changes apply to "any expenditure" using so-called synthetic media. Commissioner Douglass North said, "In simple terms, we're not proposing to prohibit anybody from doing deepfakes but simply...you've got to disclose it."

Also Thursday, commissioners approved an emergency rule requiring the name and address of the sponsor to be printed on all political yard signs up to 4 feet by 8 feet in size. The information must appear in a font size at least 10% of the largest font used on the political placard. This change applies to signs printed on or after June 6, which is when the 2024 law creating the mandate will take effect. Signs in the ground or purchased before June 6 are exempt.

This is from the *New York Times* via the *Peninsula Daily News*: As summer approaches, many people with spring allergies are still suffering. And as new COVID variants circulate, experts say we may also soon see an uptick in cases (tough wastewater data suggest that COVID cases are currently fairly low). It can be tricky to distinguish between seasonal allergy symptoms, early signs of the coronavirus, or just a run-of-the-mill cold. The clearest way to find out is with a COVID test.

Watch out for specific symptoms. Some people with COVID can experience the worst symptoms during, say, their third infection compared to their first two. But in most cases, the more immunity someone has built up – through repeat infections and/or vaccinations – the milder COVID symptoms tend to be. Dr. Davey Smith, an infectious disease specialist at the University of California, San Diego said, "In most people, it's the sneezy, stuffy nose – it's like my allergies, for sure." But people with allergies rarely develop high fevers. If you are running a temperature above 100.4 degrees, it's more likely to be COVID or another viral infection, said Dr. Purvi Parikh, an allergist and immunologist at New York University Langone Health.

COVID can also cause intestinal upset, like nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, all of which are usually not present with allergies. Those with COVID often experience body aches as well, said Dr. Lily Pien, an allergist at the Cleveland Clinic. Allergies tend to make people itchy, so if you're scratching at your eyes, ears and throat, it's much less likely to be COVID. A key difference is that allergies cause "dry" symptoms, Parikh said, meaning that allergy-related coughs typically won't produce mucus.

Both allergies and viral infections can wipe you out, but with COVID, fatigue comes on more suddenly, Dr. Parikh said, "It's not like 'I'm a little tired, I need a nap' she said. "It's usually very debilitating." Time and

context matter. If you've spent time with someone who later tested positive and now you can't stop sneezing, there's a good chance that you, too, have COVID. Or, if you develop allergy symptoms every spring and started sniffing like clockwork when the trees began to bloom, you can be fairly confident that allergies are the cause of your discomfort. Still, doctors stressed, the only surefire way to figure out the source of symptoms is with a test.

Oh, and by the way, there will not be a BOCC Health Report at the beginning of June. Dr. Berry and the Board of County Commissioners have taken a hiatus until September.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can reach out to us at news@kptz.org. This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.