

This is KPTZ 91.9FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Nigel O'Shea bringing you news and commentary from the Jefferson County *Beacon* for Wednesday, September 10, 2025.

The nonprofit Northwind Art School invites people with memory loss, along with their caregivers, to a new five-week program at Fort Worden State Park. "Now We Create: Dementia, Art and Community" begins October 2 and continues each Thursday morning through October 30 with teaching artist Jodi Ericksen. Sessions are an hour long, starting at 10:30am for each of the five Thursdays.

To learn more and sign up, visit NorthwindArt.org and click on Take a Class. Then scroll through the course offerings to find the "Aging Creatively" 5-week cohort (<https://northwindart.org/collections/courses>).

If you have felt confused or concerned about the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) restricting COVID-19 vaccines, you're not alone. Though the FDA has approved the COVID vaccine for people 65 and older and younger people with underlying health conditions, they have not approved it for others who wish to have the seasonal vaccination as COVID moves through its patterns of late summer and winter peaks. In a bold response to the people's needs, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) issued a Standing Order for the COVID-19 vaccine on September 3, allowing Washington residents to get vaccinated more easily.

Dennis Worsham, Secretary of Health, said in a press statement, "When federal agencies abandon evidence-based recommendations in favor of ideology, we cannot continue down that same path. Our commitment is to the health and safety of our communities, protecting lives through prevention, and not yielding to unsubstantiated theories that dismiss decades of proven public health practice." Everyone aged 6 months and older, including pregnant individuals who do not have contraindications to the vaccine, can receive the COVID-19 vaccine directly from a Washington pharmacy or clinic without an individual prescription. Under the authority of the State Health Officer, the Standing Order enables physicians, pharmacists, nurses, and medical assistants to administer vaccinations.

Washington Governor Bob Ferguson, California Governor Gavin Newsom, and Oregon Governor Tina Kotek announced they will launch a new West Coast Health Alliance to represent a unified regional response to the Trump Administration's dismantling of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Hawaii joined the partnership on September 4. The Alliance intends to uphold consistent scientific competence for public health policies and recommendations in Washington, California, Oregon, and Hawaii. The four states will start coordinating health guidelines informed by venerated national medical organizations regardless of federal actions. The coordinated principles will serve as the basis for the Alliance, while each state will independently devise health strategies informed by its unique laws, geographies, histories, and people.

According to a statement put out by the governor's office, this alliance doesn't impact Tribal sovereignty over their vaccine services. Some local healthcare providers have already received the 2025-26 COVID-19 vaccine, while others are still awaiting their supply. This means some providers are prioritizing higher-risk individuals.

- Don's Pharmacy is expecting its vaccines and supplies in the next couple of weeks. QFC is also awaiting additional supplies and stated, "It is recommended that you be 65 or older or at-risk to get the vaccine, but we can give you the vaccine otherwise if you fill out the paperwork."

- The Tri-Area Pharmacy in Port Hadlock-Irondale will receive its vaccine shipment in a few weeks and will determine guidelines when it arrives.
- Jefferson Healthcare in Port Ludlow is also awaiting the delivery and guidelines.
- The Sheridan clinic in Port Townsend does not have the vaccine right now and has to see you in person to decide eligibility.
- Jefferson County Public Health does not know if they will be administering vaccines outside of the CDC recommendations and does not know when they will receive the new season's shipment.
- Walgreens in Oak Harbor is not offering vaccines based on the standing order and is following the CDC guidelines for those 65 and older or those with underlying health conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure.
- Safeway in Port Townsend is currently taking appointments for the 2025-2026 Covid 19 vaccine booster with a similar caveat that the vaccine is indicated for those 65 or older or with a higher risk of severe infection.

DOH suggests bringing a digital or printed copy of this standing order (<https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-09/COVID19VaccineStandingOrder.pdf>) to your pharmacy or pharmacist. If a licensed pharmacy in Washington denies you the vaccine for any reason other than availability, then you can file a complaint with the Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission at hsqacomplaintintake@doh.wa.gov.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and 5 Tuesday through Thursday, partnering on Wednesday to bring you stories from the Jefferson County *Beacon*. This is Nigel O'Shea. Thanks for listening.