



Panhandle Health District

Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Panhandle Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 16, 2020

Contact: Katherine Hoyer
208-415-5108

Governor Little's Stay-Home Order Extended

By Katherine Hoyer & Andrea Nagel

Panhandle Health District & Kootenai Health

This is a series about COVID-19 preparation and regional updates. Check the Press daily for new information, tips, and ways our health care professionals are working to keep our community safe.

It's here. Community transmission of COVID-19 has been confirmed in Kootenai County by our epidemiologists. We cannot stop this virus, but we can all help to slow it down and protect our most vulnerable.

Fifteen out of the 28 cases that have been confirmed in the Panhandle appear to be travel related or through direct contact with a confirmed case. Meaning, the individuals most likely contracted the virus while traveling outside of our area or were in close contact with a confirmed case. In thirteen of our cases, we can find no link to travel or contact with a confirmed case. We are categorizing these cases as acquired through community transmission. Community transmission is defined as illness within a community that lacks connection to travel or other confirmed cases.

Our guidance remains the same, and we know that if everyone takes action we can slow this virus. We urge you to continue to adhere to national/State and local guidance. Stay home, do not go to work if you are sick, wash hands often and sanitize routinely. Many of you are essential workers like health care workers and first responders who need to be on the front line. We ask other essential businesses (https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/127/2020/03/IdahoEssentialServices_updated.pdf) to consider telecommuting options for their high-risk employees. Also, limit meetings to small groups (10 and under) and social distance when conducting meetings (6ft apart). Sanitize after each use of a conference room. When employees talk in breakrooms, hallways, or offices they should remain 6 feet apart.

Technology is our friend. How incredibly thankful I am to be going through this pandemic while continuing to have high-speed internet and a plethora of apps to keep me entertained, fed, and sanitized. Utilize apps and companies who offer delivery or pick-up of groceries and household items. By utilizing these apps these items can be delivered to your door or placed in your vehicle when arriving at the store without ever needing to leave your vehicle.

Epidemiologists with PHD are working to investigate cases of possible contact. All household members of confirmed cases have been asked to self-isolate at home for a prescribed period of time. If other people are found to have been exposed, health officials will provide guidance to these individuals and they will be asked to self-monitor for the development of symptoms.

Knowing community transmission is happening in our district, we expect our confirmed cases to continue to rise. Heed our advice and the Governor's Stay-home Order. You will be protecting yourself, your family, your friends, your neighbors, and your community by staying home. Nothing is more important than our health and we need everyone's help now more than ever.

PHD will continue to monitor the situation closely and is working with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, city leaders, schools, emergency management, healthcare providers, and our community at large to help prevent the spread of this virus.

Panhandle Health District provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.

#