



# Media Release

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## **COVID-19 Activity Increasing in Yakima County**

**YAKIMA, WA** –Yakima County has consistently been recognized for achieving what appeared to be an unsurmountable goal: successfully dropping COVID-19 disease activity after having one of the highest COVID-19 transmission rates in the country. Unfortunately, the data shows that the community is currently moving into its second wave of COVID-19 activity. Over the last week, cases of COVID-19 have doubled and hospitalizations have increased. With such a sharp increase in cases, it is expected that hospitalizations will continue to increase in the coming weeks.

With a drop in temperatures in the fall and winter, people are more likely to participate in higher risk activities such as socializing indoors without masks on, in close proximity. As more individuals engage in high-risk behavior, there will be an increase in COVID-19 activity across the community as there is no vaccine available at this time.

With an increase in COVID-19 through the community, there will also be an increase in outbreaks at congregative living facilities as was seen earlier in this spring at long-term care facilities, jails and temporary housing facilities. On Tuesday, the Yakima Health District Disease Investigation Team conducted a site visit to Summitview Healthcare Center where they reported 50 cases of COVID-19, 27 among staff and 23 among residents. As a result of this outbreak there have been 4 deaths among residents. These cases have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control but were not reported to the Yakima Health District. When the information is received by the Yakima Health District, we will include a data note for that day's update on our [website](#).

“In most, if not all, outbreaks at congregate living facilities, COVID-19 was introduced into the facility via community transmission. For this reason, we all must do everything we can as individuals, on behalf of our community, to stop the spread of COVID-19. There is still time to stop this trajectory and ensure it doesn't reach more of our vulnerable community members, our high-risk family members and neighbors. We know from our prior success that if we all follow the recommendations, we will see a drop in COVID-19 activity.” Said Dr. Teresa Everson, Health Officer of Yakima County.

“Our sincere condolences go out to community members who have lost loved ones due to COVID-19. These losses are deeply felt by our entire community. We must continue to think of each other and work diligently to ensure COVID-19 disease activity in our community declines.” Said Andre Fresco, Executive Director, Yakima Health District.

Decisions that we can all commit to making include: staying at home as much as possible, eliminating unnecessary contact with those outside of your household, wearing a mask whenever in close proximity to those who do not live with you, washing hands frequently and sanitizing surfaces frequently. Additionally, community members must also actively engage in the case investigation process and get tested as soon as they have symptoms or think they have been exposed to COVID-19.

“It is not any one intervention that will ensure Yakima can beat this rise in COVID-19 cases again. It will be accomplished by every community member doing their part to protect our county, each and every day. Whether we're thinking of our high-risk family members and friends, our co-workers, or our local businesses, we all must work together to protect each other.” Andre Fresco, Executive Director of the Yakima Health District.

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