

## Ed North

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**From:** Keith Grellner  
**Sent:** Friday, October 1, 2021 10:43 AM  
**To:** Ed North  
**Subject:** FW: Kitsap Community Health Board  
**Attachments:** To the Kitsap County Health Board.docx

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**From:** K O <osborne\_k1@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 27, 2021 10:29 AM  
**To:** Gib Morrow <Gib.Morrow@kitsappublichealth.org>; khytopoulos@bainbridgewa.gov; berickson@cityofpoulsbo.com; kitsapcommissioners@co.kitsap.wa.us; greg.wheeler@ci.bremerton.wa.us; rputaansuu@cityofportorchard.us; Keith Grellner <Keith.Grellner@kitsappublichealth.org>  
**Subject:** Kitsap Community Health Board

[CAUTION]: This email originated from outside Kitsap Public Health District. **Do not click links or open attachments** unless you are expecting this email. If you are unsure please contact IT.

To the Kitsap County Health Board:

I'm an upstanding member of our community. I'm also a local business owner for almost 14 years, that provides the employment of 30 people and their families who live in our county. These 30 people collectively will earn millions of dollars in wages this year. My business donates tens of thousands of dollars to 1<sup>st</sup> responder benevolent funds and youth sports in our community every year. We also through our marketing and advertising spend thousands of dollars with other local businesses to help support everyone in our community. On top of that with my business we spend millions of dollars with local vendors every year. I've always had a "local business first" approach to business even when the local business is a little more money. My reputation in our community is very good and you can ask anyone that knows me or my business about any of what I stated and you'll find it to be truth. My business model is very unique in a not so unique business. My approach to employee first business allows me to pay much higher wages then any other business like mine. Year after year I forgo personal profits and spread them to employees, first responders, youth sports and local businesses. My business model has been tried multiple times by numerous other people and even current businesses like mine, but fail to continue like me. I believe because the owners aren't willing to pay most of their profits back to the people who help create them.

My 100% choice with your 5 recommendations is #1. **#1 Allow people to make their own medical decisions or how you put it "take no action"**. If you decide to take any other action other than allow people to make their own medical decisions based on their personal medical situation I will be forced, by you, to take my own actions. I believe the most impactful decision I can make will be to close my business and stop millions of dollars from flowing into our community. Again, you have influence on whether that happens or not. The idea of choice should always be left to the individual. My company has both vaccinated and unvaccinated people. This isn't an argument for either opinion. This is a stance of the government overreaching and thinking they can make broad decision about very individual rights and decisions. Below you'll find numerous times our politicians have agreed it's not anyone's decision, but the individual to make medical decisions that are best for them.

Joe Biden: (12/4/2020)

No! I don't think it should be mandatory. I wouldn't demand it be mandatory.

Anthony Fauci: (7/7/2020)

I don't see it on a national level merely because of all the situations you have upon – approaching upon persons' freedom to make their own choice of their own health.

Anthony Fauci: (8/19/2020)

We don't want to mandate and try to force anyone to take a vaccine. We've never don't that!

Anthony Fauci: (8/19/2020)

We don't want to be mandating from the federal government to the general population. It would be unenforceable and not appropriate.

Jen Psaki: (4/6/2021)

Americans' privacy and rights should be protected.

Nancy Pelosi: (4/29/2021)

We cannot require someone to be vaccinated. That's just not what we can do.

Nancy Pelosi: (4/29/2021)

It is a matter of privacy to know who is or who isn't.

Kamala Harris: (9/10/2021)

The right of women to make decisions about their own bodies is not negotiable.

I would be open to having a public discussion about anything the Health Board would like to talk about. I have a reputation for being very open to new ideas and new ways to approach situations. Please reach out with any questions or statements.

Thank you

Kasey Osborne



To the Kitsap County Health Board:

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Thank you

Kasey Osborne

## Ed North

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**From:** Keith Grellner  
**Sent:** Friday, October 1, 2021 10:42 AM  
**To:** Ed North  
**Subject:** FW: Concerning Kitsap County Health Board meeting Sept. 28, 2021  
**Attachments:** Concerning Kitsap County Health Board meeting Sept. 28, 2021

-----Original Message-----

From: Blair, Penny L CIV USN NAVSHIPYDIMF PGS WA (USA) <penny.blair@navy.mil>  
Sent: Monday, September 27, 2021 11:56 AM  
To: Keith Grellner <Keith.Grellner@kitsappublichealth.org>  
Subject: Concerning Kitsap County Health Board meeting Sept. 28, 2021

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## Ed North

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**From:** Blair, Penny L CIV USN NAVSHIPYDIMF PGS WA (USA) <penny.blair@navy.mil>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 27, 2021 11:56 AM  
**To:** Keith Grellner  
**Subject:** Concerning Kitsap County Health Board meeting Sept. 28, 2021

Mr. Grellner,

Just wanting to let you know that I am hoping that any decisions you make during the meeting on September 28th will be made in order to protect our personal freedoms from here on out including no vaccination passports, vaccination requirements, or any other decisions that would require further loss of our personal freedoms throughout Kitsap County.

Looking at your options, option number 1 that states "Take no action and allow the current situation to play out.", appears to be the only clear choice on your list of options that keeps our county open and free.

Thank you for your time,  
Penny Blair  
CTD Program Manager  
Code 900W.5 Workforce Development  
(360) 620-0793

But now faith, hope, love,  
Abide these three;  
But the greatest of these is love.  
I Cor. 13:13

## Ed North

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**From:** Keith Grellner  
**Sent:** Friday, October 1, 2021 10:39 AM  
**To:** Ed North  
**Subject:** FW: Kitsap County Health District  
**Attachments:** September 27 2021 Letter.docx

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**From:** Robert Gelder <[rgelder@co.kitsap.wa.us](mailto:rgelder@co.kitsap.wa.us)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 30, 2021 1:26 PM  
**To:** Keith Grellner <[Keith.Grellner@kitsappublichealth.org](mailto:Keith.Grellner@kitsappublichealth.org)>; Gib Morrow <[Gib.Morrow@kitsappublichealth.org](mailto:Gib.Morrow@kitsappublichealth.org)>  
**Subject:** FW: Kitsap County Health District

[CAUTION]: This email originated from outside Kitsap Public Health District. **Do not click links or open attachments** unless you are expecting this email. If you are unsure please contact IT.

Robert Gelder  
Commissioner, District 1  
Kitsap County  
(360) 337-7080  
[rgelder@co.kitsap.wa.us](mailto:rgelder@co.kitsap.wa.us)  
[www.kitsapgov.com](http://www.kitsapgov.com)

General inquiries to:  
[kitsapcommissioners@co.kitsap.wa.us](mailto:kitsapcommissioners@co.kitsap.wa.us) (360) 337-7080



Kitsap County Public Works  
An APWA Accredited Agency



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**From:** Kaili Campbell <[director@kingstonchamber.com](mailto:director@kingstonchamber.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 30, 2021 9:53 AM  
**To:** Robert Gelder <[rgelder@co.kitsap.wa.us](mailto:rgelder@co.kitsap.wa.us)>  
**Subject:** Kitsap County Health District

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Dear Commissioner Robert Gelder,

On behalf of the Greater Kingston Community Chamber of Commerce we feel that it is our responsibility to reach out and share this letter with you. We do understand that as of right now this letter may not apply but as things are changing so rapidly we just want you to know where we stand as the Greater Kingston Community Chamber of Commerce.

Thank you for your time.

--

Kaili Campbell  
Administrative Coordinator  
Greater Kingston Community Chamber of Commerce  
Direct/Text- (360) 860-2239  
[kingstonchamber.com](http://kingstonchamber.com)

September 27, 2021

Kitsap Public Health Department Board of Directors,

Today we write to urge you to not adopt/issue a formal Health Board / Health Officer order under RCW 70.05 to require all business open to the public, or indoor venues open to the public, to require proof of vaccination for entry.

As a collective, the chambers will continue to urge everyone become vaccinated as soon as possible. The science is clear: vaccines work. We know they are the path to a safe and sustained reopening, and we are proud of all the work the Health District has done in getting shots in arms.

While recently, COVID-19 activity has spiked, it is again on the decline in Kitsap County. In speaking with leaders at St. Michael's Medical Center, hospitalizations have declined over 33% in the past 2 weeks alone. With this in mind, we realize that there are public policy choices about how to continue to minimize risk of spread. As a business advocate, we saw the dramatic impacts of restrictions and closures on many of our members and their employees before vaccines were available. Now with many of our county's residents fully vaccinated, we want to keep our businesses open. We will continue to advocate for an approach that is balanced and allows our members to remain open.

In the memo from Dr. Gib Morrow, Public Health Officer, he urges you to require all businesses open to the public to require proof of vaccination for entry. While we understand his motives, we are disheartened that no one has consulted our chambers for a path forward that works for our community as a whole. We believe that vaccination verification is the wrong move for our community for the follow reasons:

1. Undue burden on the business community.
  - a. None of the employees in Kitsap County have been trained to read or detect fake vaccination cards. Many have likened showing a vaccination card to showing your license to be served alcohol. But even servers must be properly trained before serving alcohol. No such training exists today for vaccination cards.
  - b. Employers will need to hire/train additional staff in an already tight labor market to accommodate a policy that wasn't in their business plan. How does the Health District plan to assist in offsetting these additional costs to employers?
2. Significant loss of business in an already challenging economic climate.
  - a. Businesses have already alerted us of their concerns. They have heard from some of their customer base, who have indicated they won't patronize a business who willingly acquiesces to an 'invasion of privacy'.

While we believe that vaccination is the best path forward for most in our community, we don't believe that our local businesses are the right entity to enforce compliance. Throughout this pandemic, many of the Chamber's member businesses have been on the front lines providing services to our county while keeping the economy from freefalling. As Kitsap adapts yet again to contain the virus, the Chamber is here to be your partner. We look forward to working with you and urging all individuals, and our community at large to take the steps necessary to keep people healthy, businesses open to finally move past this pandemic.

We're here to support you,

Boards and Staff of Bremerton Chamber of Commerce, Kingston Chamber of Commerce, Poulsbo Chamber of Commerce, and South Kitsap Chamber of Commerce



## Ed North

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**From:** Keith Grellner  
**Sent:** Friday, October 1, 2021 10:42 AM  
**To:** Ed North  
**Subject:** FW: Kitsap County Health Board Special Meeting Citizen Comments  
**Attachments:** health district[2876].pdf

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**From:** Robert McGee <rkmcgee@outlook.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 27, 2021 2:04 PM  
**To:** Keith Grellner <Keith.Grellner@kitsappublichealth.org>  
**Subject:** Kitsap County Health Board Special Meeting Citizen Comments

[CAUTION]: This email originated from outside Kitsap Public Health District. **Do not click links or open attachments** unless you are expecting this email. If you are unsure please contact IT.

Here are my comments for the meeting tomorrow.

Thank you for taking the time to read them.

Sincerely, Kristi McGee

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

KRISTI MCGEE

9/27/2021

SOUTH KITSAP RESIDENT/BUSINESS OWNER

Comments and concerns regarding Kitsap County Health Board Special Meeting Agenda Discussion Points.

My position is to **Take no action and allow the current situation to play out.**

*With numbers currently falling 206/100K as of Sept 27 down from 286/100K as of Sept 16, I would urge our Health District to wait and see how this situation plays out. To require such drastic intervention as listed below will cause significant additional burdens on small businesses and individuals-especially with a significant decrease in cases over the past 11 days.*

2. Make a formal Health Board recommendation/resolution for all local governmental agencies to require vaccination for their employees.

*This is government overreach. Not sure why it's in the agenda since the President already mandated it. Are you going to make our local post office employees do it even though federal mandate omits them? Not sure how far you plan to take this. I expand more in the next section.*

3. Make a formal Health Board recommendation/resolution for all private businesses to require vaccination for their employees and/or require proof of vaccination for entry into indoor public places.

*This even goes against the federal mandate of businesses over 100 people being required to mandate all employees be vaccinated. Why does Kitsap County think they can rule with an iron fist like this and insist on some of the strictest mandates in the nation. We have some of the highest vaccination rates in the country and yet what seems to be some of the strictest policies being proposed.*

*Small business may need to hire a full-time employee to monitor for vaccine card which could cost a restaurant that is open 13 hours a day in excess of \$6,000 a month. It is already hard enough to find employees who are willing to work let alone budget for the extra labor cost while losing up to 30% of its customers (about how many are not vaccinated in our county). In addition, there are no training courses to teach staff how to properly check for valid vaccine status. Who pays for that training and who gives it?*

4. Issue a formal Health Board / Health Officer order under the authority of RCW 70.05 to require employee vaccinations at governmental agencies.

*Take no action.*

Again, government overreach. With 65% of our county fully vaccinated and 71% initiating vaccination and numbers falling dramatically at the moment, this action is not supported by the information.

5. Issue a formal Health Board / Health Officer order under RCW 70.05 to require all business open to the public, or indoor venues open to the public, to require proof of vaccination for entry.

*Does this includes essential businesses like grocery stores and medical facilities? If so, I would like to formally submit a complaint against this action. To discriminate against 30 % of your population by making food harder to come by and medical inaccessible is egregious and will cause more harm to the people of your cities and counties. Trust and what little faith any of us have left in our system will be lost. Just reading this paragraph makes me feel a sense of heartlessness that our leaders at the health district have. Again, with the numbers falling currently and with more people having natural immunity along with rising rates of vaccinations, these mandates are extremely excessive.*

*I also request a full and thorough study of how this will affect the hundreds of small businesses in Kitsap County as well as its residents. I want to hear more about us and less about the how we are supposed to keep bending over backwards to take one for the medical system that is clearly understaffed and broken. Why aren't hospitals being required to hire more staff to support the region? It continues to fall on normal everyday people that just want to live their lives. We are not here to cater to the medical system nor to the government, in fact, it should be the other way around. Please stop relying on us to keep the burden and do not cast out many in our community for your current lack of ability to do so.*

#### NOVAVAX VACCINE OPTION

*Also, with the new Novavax expected to come out in October why is there such an urgency for mandatory vaccinations at this moment? If that vaccine is promoted, I bet more would get vaccinated too. Here is a link to the vaccine. It is scheduled to come out in the next few months.*

<https://www.novavax.com/>

<https://www.wdef.com/novavax-vaccine-getting-ready-to-apply-for-full-approval/>

*I urge the Health District and the Board to seriously consider this option and promote it as soon as possible. With this on the near horizon we could surely wait for it and expect to see vaccination rates raise after it's available.*

#### NATURAL IMMUNITY

*And what about natural immunity? If one has antibodies and has had a previous covid positive test, why are they not considered in the "vaccinated" statistics? It is estimated that 1 out of 3 Americans had natural immunity. This adds a considerable amount of people to the equation. When is enough, enough? We have done all you have expected it's time to stop with this overreach. The virus is here, it is very serious for some and survivable by 95-99% by the many. Natural infection and immunity is as good as any vaccine, if not better, than any that are currently are available.*

#### STOP WITH THE NARRATIVE SAFETY FIRST

*Please realize that safety is never first. If safely was first we wouldn't drive, climb mountains, skydive, ski, etc. There is always the individual's calculation of risk vs benefit. We all do it every day. Please realize that you are not doing this because of safety first. You are weighing the risk vs benefit from your bias in the health care industry or what you are hearing from the Director of Heath as a board member. I urge you to have conversations and understand the risk vs benefit outside of health care. You may find that the lives this intrudes upon may be more at risk than you think. We are well aware of the deaths and the stress on one system (health care), but you need to stop with that and start acknowledging and listening to the other 99% of the system. We are out here getting tossed around in the name of politics and power*

*and it's time for it to stop. One doesn't need to be a doctor or mayor or commissioner to know the real impacts this is having. Those titles do not make you more knowledgeable. You were elected to represent us, and now you are becoming a statistic in the fear-based power that is being beat into us constantly. I urge to stand strong and again, with the numbers falling, please wait this out.*

*Your agenda looks to be some of the most restrictive in the country. Not sure what gives you that right or need. People are still receiving treatment and Kitsap County is not in crisis. Our hospitals are not choosing who lives and dies. Those that need the vaccines most should get them. Those that choose to get one should and have that right. Those that choose not to vaccinate, or cannot, should have that right to decline as well. Why the need for the excessive force?*

*It has been my experience that not everyone responds well to forced directives from those that seem to think they are in touch with them and make decisions for them based on whatever statistics they hear. If restrictions are too restrictive, we know that necessity is the mother of all invention, and this will continue to foster the at home and private social gatherings among those who will not get vaccinated. If they are denied preventative health care because of their status, that will be blood on your hands and even when we are not experiencing covid hospitalizations, you will most definitely have many people seeking treatment for health care that was denied to them and resulted in worse outcome and more difficult treatments. Without health care granted what should be just a simple teeth cleaning at the dentist can turn into serious infections and death, a small freckle will result in long term cancer treatment, lack of gym access will lead to weight gain, high blood pressure and obesity related diseases which happen to be the main co morbidities for covid related deaths. I fear the potential long term fall out will be much worse than Covid itself.*

*On a personal note, as a gym owner, the past two years of restrictions, closures and loss of business has been way more difficult than having the virus. Nine months after the second shutdown my gym is barely breaking even, and we lost 40% of our membership. People were slow and afraid to come back since my industry took the brunt of it. I only qualified for \$7,800 in PPP and have lost much income potential. Do you realize that sum didn't even cover my expenditures for 2 months? Did you even know that Bob Ferguson issued a statement that if gyms did not issue refunds for any reason declared by a contract holder would be considered in violation of the Consumer Protection Act? That we would be fined \$2000 for any incident or complaint filed against us? We had to give up income under threat of large fines and signed contracts were deemed null and void.*

*A forced mandate this strong will once again affect business. Every person in our county needs to take some responsibly for how they fare during this pandemic. I understand that any death and suffering is too much at the hand of this virus, but it is the same at the hand of mandates such as these. Because 29% of our residents choose not to, or cannot receive the current vaccinations on the market, business owners and individuals should not have to take on the burden any more than they have. Pitting us against the unvaccinated is wrong and frankly, I am tired of it. Having it all taken from me without my choice has made more passionate in standing up for individual rights and choices. For the most part, I am a rule follower, but something this extreme and forceful like you are proposing is wrong and I have proven my point.*

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely, Kristi McGee

## Ed North

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**From:** Keith Grellner  
**Sent:** Friday, October 1, 2021 10:41 AM  
**To:** Ed North  
**Subject:** FW: Kitsap Public Health Special Meeting September 28  
**Attachments:** 0928\_BOH\_Agenda.pdf

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**From:** Shane DeGross <shane.degross@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 27, 2021 4:00 PM  
**To:** Keith Grellner <Keith.Grellner@kitsappublichealth.org>; jesse.young@leg.wa.gov  
**Subject:** Kitsap Public Health Special Meeting September 28

[CAUTION]: This email originated from outside Kitsap Public Health District. **Do not click links or open attachments** unless you are expecting this email. If you are unsure please contact IT.

Mr. Grellner, the Kitsap Public Health Board and Rep. Young,

It has come to my attention that the Kitsap Public Health Board is holding a special meeting on September 28, 2021 and is not allowing the public to participate/comment except via email/letter to Mr. Grellner's office. I find that not allowing the public to have a voice in important public policy decisions deeply troublesome to the very foundation of our republic.

In the information packet for the meeting (attached) Dr. Gib Morrow seeks the board's recommendations on five options:

1. Take no action and allow the current situation to play out.
2. Make a formal Health Board recommendation/resolution for all local governmental agencies to require vaccination for their employees.
3. Make a formal Health Board recommendation/resolution for all private businesses to require vaccination for their employees and/or require proof of vaccination for entry into indoor public places.
4. Issue a formal Health Board / Health Officer order under the authority of RCW 70.05 to require employee vaccinations at governmental agencies.
5. Issue a formal Health Board / Health Officer order under RCW 70.05 to require all businesses open to the public, or indoor venues open to the public, to require proof of vaccination for entry.

Our community has suffered long enough under the tyranny of mandates and emergency powers held long too far by elected officials. Forcing any citizen or employee to take an experimental vaccine via coercion is reprehensible and in direct violation of the Civil Rights Act, US Constitution, and Nuremberg Code. Taking a vaccine is a personal decision taken under advisement of one's personal physician. It should never be mandated or coerced by government officials. Many who object to vaccines on religious grounds are now forced to be second class citizens and the result of these draconian mandates only serve to segregate our society on religious grounds. This is tyranny. Additionally, the recommendations do not even consider those who have contracted COVID, recovered fully, are naturally immune and do not need to be vaccinated. This is simply bad public policy and should be completely rejected.

I urge the board to respect the rights of citizens to make our own health care decisions without fear of retribution, coercion or prejudice.

Signed,  
Shane DeGross  
Port Orchard WA

## KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

September 28, 2021  
11:00 a.m. to Noon

**\*\* Please note that this is a virtual / online meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Electronic connection and viewing information for the meeting is provided at the end of the agenda. \*\***

- 11:00 a.m.     1.     Call to Order  
                                 *Commissioner Charlotte Garrido, Chair*

### INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 11:02 a.m.     2.     COVID-19 Update: Current Impacts to Local Healthcare and  
                                 Emergency Medical Services in Kitsap County     *Page 3*  
                                 *Dr. Gib Morrow, Health Officer*  
                                 *John Oliver, Fire Chief, Central Kitsap Fire & Rescue*  
                                 *Dr. David Weiss, Associate Chief Medical Officer, St. Michael Medical*  
                                 *Center*  
                                 *Elizabeth Klute, Director, Kitsap County Department of Emergency*  
                                 *Management*

- 11:20 a.m.     3.     Board Q & A and Discussion  
                                 *Commissioner Charlotte Garrido, Chair*

- 12:00 p.m.     4.     Adjourn

*All times are approximate. Board meeting materials are available online at*  
[www.kitsappublichealth.org/about/board-meetings.php](http://www.kitsappublichealth.org/about/board-meetings.php)

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Instructions for virtual attendance at Kitsap Public Health Board meetings\*\*

### Health Board Meetings Via Zoom

The Kitsap Public Health Board will be held via Zoom webinar, broadcast live on Comcast channel 12, WAVE channel 3, the [BKAT website](http://www.kitsappublichealth.org) and Facebook (please note: there is no physical location for this meeting. Board members and staff will all participate remotely). The Health Board and presenters are **panelists**, members of the public are **attendees**.

Webinar **attendees** do not interact with one another; they join in listen-only mode, and the host will unmute one or more attendees as needed.

## No Public Comment Will Be Taken

No public comment will be taken at this special meeting. However, written comment to the Health Board is always welcome.

Written comments may be submitted via regular mail or email to:

**Regular Mail:**

Kitsap Public Health Board  
Attention: Executive Secretary  
345 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 300  
Bremerton, WA 98337

**Email:**

[keith.grellner@kitsappublichealth.org](mailto:keith.grellner@kitsappublichealth.org)

The Health Board will be meeting again for a regular meeting on October 5, 2021, at 10:30 a.m. Public comment will be taken during the October 5 regular meeting.

## How to Join the Zoom Meeting

**To join the meeting online, please click the link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86186052497?pwd=TXcrQU1PRWVVBHgyWERXRFluTWloQT09>

**Password:** 109118

**Or join by telephone:**

Dial: +1 (253) 215-8782

**Webinar ID:** 861 8605 2497

\*Zoom meeting is limited to the first 500 participants. A recording of the meeting will be made available on our website within 48 hours of the meeting.

# MEMO

**To:** Kitsap Public Health Board

**From:** Dr. Gib Morrow, MD, MPH, Health Officer

**Date:** September 28, 2021

**Re:** COVID-19 Update – Current Impacts to Local Healthcare and Emergency Medical Services in Kitsap County

During the Health Board’s regular meeting on September 7, 2021, board members asked the Health District to schedule a special meeting to present and discuss the current impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our local healthcare system and possible solutions to stabilize the continuum of care in our community. Today, I will be joined by Fire Chief John Oliver of Central Kitsap Fire and Rescue and the Chair of the Kitsap County EMS Council, Dr. David Weiss, Associate Chief Medical Officer for St. Michael Medical Center, and Elizabeth Klute, Director of Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management.

## **Background**

COVID-19 disease transmission remains at its [highest level of the pandemic in Kitsap County](#), with over 700 new cases diagnosed each week since mid-August. This has resulted in over 219 hospitalizations of Kitsap residents in the past 30 days, 11 active outbreaks in long-term care facilities involving over 250 residents and staff, and at least 28 deaths in the first three weeks of September, alone. Furthermore, more deaths are expected as reconciliation of death data may take several weeks to be completed.

This surge in disease activity, driven by the highly transmissible Delta variant and most severely impacting the unvaccinated, is critically straining a depleted and fragile healthcare system, which is now operating at levels approaching “crisis standards of care”. According to the Institute of Medicine<sup>1</sup>:

*“Crisis standards of care” is defined as a substantial change in usual healthcare operations and the level of care it is possible to deliver, which is made necessary by a pervasive (e.g., pandemic influenza) or catastrophic (e.g., earthquake, hurricane) disaster. This change in the level of care delivered is justified by specific circumstances and is formally declared by a state government, in recognition that crisis operations will*

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*be in effect for a sustained period. The formal declaration that crisis standards of care are in operation enables specific legal/regulatory powers and protections for healthcare providers in the necessary tasks of allocating and using scarce medical resources and implementing alternate care facility operations.*

Our panelists today will address how outbreaks and infected staff --- primarily unvaccinated staff --- in nursing homes have delayed patient discharges from the hospital, contributing to the already high COVID-19 inpatient census levels at the hospital (currently in the mid-60's), which in turn has resulted in the need to "board" new admissions in the Emergency Department at the hospital for up to three days or longer. Boarding new admissions in the Emergency Department means that there are not sufficient beds available to handle incoming emergency patients.

Intermittent bottlenecks at the Emergency Department have led to significant delays in EMS drop-offs from ambulances. When ambulances are delayed at the hospital it means that they are essentially "taken out of service" for the duration of the delay, resulting in a shortage of emergency medical services staff and ambulances at a time when the need for their services is already at critically high levels. This has led to periods during which emergency medical services are unavailable or severely degraded in Kitsap communities. Additional impacts include ongoing delays of non-urgent surgical procedures for issues such as joint replacements, cancer resections, cardiothoracic interventions, or other surgeries that may require inpatient admission.

This situation has reached a point where it has become an emergent community health issue. Staffing at our local healthcare facilities remains a critical challenge due to personnel shortages. Just this week, to address the healthcare personnel shortages in Kitsap and the rest of Washington state, the state Department of Health has formally requested 1,200 clinical and non-clinical staff to assist statewide through the federal General Services Administration, and our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is recruiting volunteers from our local Medical Reserve Corps to assist locally.

The Health District and EOC have activated a multi-agency response to evaluate ways to decompress the overburdened healthcare system by supplementing depleted staff in the hospital and post-acute care facilities, stand up new alternative care facilities including triage tents at the St. Michael Medical Center (SMMC) Emergency Department, and possibly opening new post-acute care facilities. Participants in these discussions have included the Northwest Healthcare Response Network, our local hospital system, Kitsap Emergency Operations Center, the Washington State Department of Health, Kitsap EMS Council, and the Medical Reserve Corps. Kitsap Public Health District has also been asked to participate in a healthcare coalition to address opportunities for stabilizing the workforce in long-term care facilities.

### **Summary and Next Steps**

The continuum of care in the Kitsap County healthcare system is severely strained after months battling this pandemic and is, at times, approaching the blurred borders of “Crisis Standards of Care,” in which health systems and providers are required to openly deviate from usual standard of care or use criteria to ration or selectively administer limited resources. This means that medical staff may have to choose between who gets care and who doesn’t. This has happened already in northern Idaho, Alaska, Montana, and parts of the southwest, and is at risk of happening in Washington State and Kitsap County, which under the best circumstances already have some of the lowest numbers of hospital beds on a per capita basis nationally.

Vaccinations are the best tool --- really the only tool if we want to keep the economy and schools open --- to prevent this potential disaster and mitigate the impacts of this pandemic on individual and community health, on our healthcare system, and on the collateral damage to our economy, businesses, schools, and government.

Kitsap Public Health District has implemented its own vaccination requirements for its employees to protect its workers and the people it serves, and we recommend that all governmental agencies in Kitsap immediately resolve to implement vaccination requirements for their employees at this time, as now required in Washington state under recently issued federal mandates for large employers. We firmly believe that government should lead the way in this effort if we expect others to follow.

The Health District also strongly recommends that local businesses in the hospitality and entertainment sectors voluntarily enact vaccination requirements for employees and patrons at this time, similar to what the Admiral Theatre has done as you heard about during your September 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

During today’s meeting, it is our goal to discuss and get direction from the Board about other measures to take to address this critical stage of the pandemic in Kitsap County.

### **Recommended Action**

While the Health District recognizes that vaccination requirements are a complex and controversial topic to some, we hope to receive direction from the Health Board on how you would like to proceed with respect to the following, or other, options:

1. Take no action and allow the current situation to play out.
2. Make a formal Health Board recommendation/resolution for all local governmental agencies to require vaccination for their employees.
3. Make a formal Health Board recommendation/resolution for all private businesses to require vaccination for their employees and/or require proof of vaccination for entry into indoor public places.

4. Issue a formal Health Board / Health Officer order under the authority of RCW 70.05 to require employee vaccinations at governmental agencies.
5. Issue a formal Health Board / Health Officer order under RCW 70.05 to require all business open to the public, or indoor venues open to the public, to require proof of vaccination for entry.

Footnote:

- <sup>1</sup> Institute of Medicine (US) Forum on Medical and Public Health Preparedness for Catastrophic Events. Washington (DC): [National Academies Press \(US\)](#); 2010.