

HEALTH OFFICER'S ORDER NO. 20-056

March 4, 2020

RE: Declaration of Public Health Emergency and Suspension of Formal Bidding Requirements

WHEREAS, COVID-19, a respiratory disease that can result in serious illness or death, is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which is a new strain of coronavirus that had not been previously identified in humans and can easily spread from person to person; and

WHEREAS, the CDC identifies the potential public health threat posed by COVID-19 both globally and in the United States as “high” and has advised that person-to-person spread of COVID-19 will continue to occur globally, including within the United States and Snohomish County; and

WHEREAS, the CDC currently indicates there are over 85,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 worldwide with multiple cases in the United States, and the Washington State Department of Health confirmed localized person-to-person spread of COVID-19 in Washington State, significantly increasing the risk of exposure and infection to Washington State’s general public creating an extreme public health risk that may spread quickly; and

WHEREAS, Snohomish County has had 8 cases of COVID-19, including 1 confirmed fatality, and 28 Persons Under Investigation (PUIs); and

WHEREAS, under RCW 70.05.070, the Health Officer has broad authority to take action to control and prevent the spread of any dangerous, contagious, or infectious diseases that may occur within his or her jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, on January 20, 2020, the Snohomish Health District activated its District Operations Center to manage their response to the nation’s first case of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on January 31, 2020, the United States Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar declared a public health emergency for COVID-19, beginning January 27, 2020; and

WHEREAS, on February 29, 2020, Washington Governor Jay Inslee declared a state of emergency in response to the continued and growing threat presented by COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 2, 2020, the Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management, Snohomish County Emergency Coordination Center, began coordinating information and resources across county government to support the Snohomish Health District in alleviating the impacts to people, property, and infrastructure, and is assessing the magnitude and long-term effects of the incident with the Snohomish Health District; and

WHEREAS, this emergency could result in a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, a declaration of emergency provides access to funding and services necessary to combat epidemics; and

WHEREAS, under Snohomish Health District Purchasing Policy dated 11/9/11, in the event of an emergency, the Health Officer has the ability to waive formal purchasing and bidding requirements, where delay may increase the risk to public health; and

WHEREAS, the Snohomish Health District is experiencing a rapid increase in the demands created by COVID-19, both financially and from a personnel perspective; and

WHEREAS, suspension and waiver of formal purchasing and bidding requirements is appropriate in light of the circumstances.


NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby DECLARED and ORDERED as follows:

1. The spread of COVID-19 and the effort to combat it and suppress its impacts to persons in Snohomish County requires extraordinary measures and constitutes a public health emergency. A public health emergency is hereby DECLARED to exist.
2. It is further ORDERED that formal purchasing and bidding requirements and public notice requirements for purchase of supplies, equipment, or personal services are hereby suspended and waived for expenditures related to COVID-19.

This order shall remain in effect until terminated by subsequent order.



Christopher Spitters, MD, MPH
Interim Health Officer



Date