

## HEALTH OFFICER'S ORDER NO. 20-059

March 11, 2020

RE: Order of the Health Officer on Events during Declaration of Public Health Emergency

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, Governor Jay Inslee proclaimed a state of emergency within the State of Washington due to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 4, 2020, Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers proclaimed a state of emergency within Snohomish County due to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 4, 2020, Snohomish County Health Officer's Order 20-056 declared a public health emergency in the county due to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, the Snohomish Health District Board of Health adopted Resolution No. 20-06 declaring a public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, state law, RCW 70.05.070(2),(3), requires and empowers the local health officer to take such action as is necessary to maintain health and to control and prevent the spread of any contagious or infectious diseases within the jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, state regulation, WAC 246-100-036, requires the local health officer, when necessary, to institute disease control and containment control measures, including social distancing measures he or she deems necessary based on his or her professional judgment; and

WHEREAS, there is evidence of increasing transmission of COVID-19 within Snohomish County, scientific evidence, and national public health guidance regarding strategies to slow the transmission of COVID-19 include the need to protect vulnerable members of the public from avoidable risk of serious illness or death resulting from exposure to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the age, condition, and health of a significant portion of the population of Snohomish County places it at risk for serious health complications, including death, from COVID-19. Although most individuals who contract COVID-19 do not become seriously ill, persons with mild symptoms and asymptomatic persons with COVID-19 may place other vulnerable members of the public at significant risk; and

WHEREAS, a large surge in the number of persons with serious infections can compromise the ability of the regional healthcare system to deliver necessary healthcare to the public; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of limitations on large gatherings and use of social distancing decreases the risk of COVID-19 transmission to our most vulnerable populations and is especially important for people who are over 60 years old and those with chronic health conditions due to the higher risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, this Order will reduce the likelihood that many individuals will be exposed to COVID-19 at a single event, and will thereby slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community; and

WHEREAS, this Order will help preserve critical and limited healthcare capacity in the County by reducing the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, this Order is issued in accordance with, and incorporates by reference, the March 11, 2020, Governor's Executive Proclamation on COVID-19 Community Mitigation Strategies; and

WHEREAS, this Order is issued in light of the existence of 60 cases of COVID-19 (including 2 deaths) in Snohomish County, as of March 10, 2020, and a significant and increasing number of assumed cases of community transmission occurring at a time when implementation of large-scale social distancing measures is recommended; and

WHEREAS, because social distancing measures can reduce COVID-19 transmission by decreasing the frequency and duration of social contact among persons of all ages, this Order is issued to prevent circumstances often present in mass gatherings that may exacerbate the spread of COVID-19, such as: (a) the increased likelihood that mass gatherings will attract people from a broad geographic area; (b) the a physical environment in which large numbers of people are in close proximity and have multiple opportunities for close contact with one another that facilitates the spread of COVID-19, and; (c) the difficulty in tracing exposure and implementing traditional public health containment measures when large numbers of people attend a single event; and

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WHEREAS, this Order comes after the release of substantial guidance from the Washington State Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other public health officials throughout the United States and around the world. The Local Health Officer will continue to assess this quickly evolving situation and may modify or extend this Order or issue additional Orders, related to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Local Health Officer hereby finds it is necessary to institute social distancing measures within Snohomish County.

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

1. All events of 250 or greater attendees are prohibited.
2. Events with fewer than 250 attendees are prohibited unless event organizers take the following steps to minimize risk:
  - Older adults and individuals with underlying medical conditions that may increase the risk of serious COVID-19 are encouraged not to attend (including employees)
  - Social distancing recommendations must be met (i.e., people staying 6 feet from each other, aside from momentary and minimal contact at closer distances when absolutely necessary)
  - Employees must be screened for coronavirus symptoms each day and excluded if symptomatic
  - Proper hand hygiene and sanitation must be readily available to all attendees and employees
  - Environmental cleaning guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are followed (e.g., clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces daily or more frequently).

For the purposes of this Order, an “event” is a gathering for business, social, spiritual, or recreational activities including, but not limited to, community, civic, public, leisure, faith-based, or sporting events; parades; concerts; festivals; conventions; fundraisers; and similar activities. An “event” does not include normal school, healthcare facility, or other public safety and critical infrastructure operations.

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



Christopher Spitters, MD, MPH  
Health Officer



Date