

## **TRANSCRIPT: Snohomish County Response to COVID-19, August 4, 2020, Briefing**

**Dave Somers:** Thank you. Good morning everybody and thanks for joining us today. As you know, COVID-19 has had a direct and indirect impact on virtually every part of our community, and one very important part of that community is our economy and there's been a heavy toll on travel and aerospace. So last week we learned Boeing will be slowing production and making other tough decisions to respond to the decrease in demand for aircraft. We know Snohomish County has the best trained workforce in the world. We have amazing educational institutions to help supply workers to our businesses. And we have a very strong supply network built up here in Snohomish County and in the region. So we're going to be working hard to make our case to Boeing to maintain the 787 line here in Everett. I've called a meeting of our aerospace task force to ensure that we have all hands on deck and we're all working together. We'll all need to work with our partners and leave nothing on the table, and Boeing has been in Snohomish County for over 50 years and in the region for over 100. So we just want to make sure that they know we're doing all we can to be a great home for them.

A couple of good pieces of work and good news last week is we saw commercial air service restart at Paine Field. That was the first service in over 10 weeks, so it was great to see. I went out there joined by Congressman Larsen and Mayor Franklin. And it was great to see people in the terminal and planes starting to come in and out, so I'm very grateful for the terminal's operator, Propeller Airports, and their investors who are really committed to maintaining operations even if flights are less frequent than last year. We know over time we're going to get through COVID and the demand for travel and air travel in the region is outpacing our capacity. We know Paine Field will be an important part of the future and meeting that demand, so great to see that terminal starting up again. It's a beautiful terminal.

So the second piece of good news is we notified presumptive awardees of our aerospace training grants. We let folks know yesterday and we'll be putting out more details today about that program. We know that helping aerospace companies maintain a well trained workforce is going to be a really important piece of recovery. We appreciate all the hard work that Workforce Snohomish and our staff put into these grant programs. We stood them up in very short order. It takes a great deal of work in a short period of time to launch these programs and administer them. So we know how badly these funds are needed, and if there are additional federal funds that are made available to us, we're going to try to do even more. We know that every grant we can get out the door represents another business that is more resilient and better able to weather the economic pain that everybody's feeling. So it's a lifeline to our workers, we know that, and to our businesses. We'll continue to be quick and decisive and get those dollars out as quickly as we can.

And the last thing I want to say today is really just let's remember to maintain social distancing. Our county parks continue to be packed on the weekends and on Sunday weekdays also. And we very much want to keep them open. However, if they become so crowded that we can no longer maintain safety of our guests and staff, we will be forced to close them. So please, if you see park gates closed, find somewhere else to go or something else to do. And there's a lot of information on our county website about the status of our park, so everybody keep safe, wear a mask, and let's keep the numbers flat or headed in the right direction, the trend we've seen in the last couple of days. So keep our fingers crossed and keep our guard up. So with that, I'll hand it over to Katie Curtis from the Snohomish Health District.

**Katie Curtis:** Thank you, Executive Somers. Good morning, everybody. I'd like to start out with an update regarding cases in the county. Yesterday we hit a total number of COVID cases for the year at 5,885 cases. Over the last few days we have consistently received reports of over 30 cases per day, with about 80 cases coming in over the weekend. We do have case and contact tracers working seven days a week here at the Health District. So we are working very diligently to get all of those cases investigated.

I'd like to give you a quick update on our testing capacity. The Health District announced last week that we were going to be moving back to our original testing location at 3900 Broadway. We had to slightly delay that shift. So we are back at McCollum Park this week and the schedule is today we're going to be there from noon until seven, on Wednesday we'll be there from nine to four, on Thursday we will be there from noon to 7 p.m., and then on Friday we will be there from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. We are able to accommodate 250 to 300 people at the McCollum site per day and you can find a link to how to sign up for a testing spot on our website. ([www.snohd.org/drive-thru-testing](http://www.snohd.org/drive-thru-testing)). And we are still planning to move to the Broadway site in the near future. So we will make sure that that is widely messaged. And this will allow us to practically double our testing capacity in the county provided by the Health District. So it's kind of an exciting opportunity for us.

And then for the last several weeks, we've been releasing the weekly snapshot based on metrics and targets for phase two. And we are also, we also release a more detailed report on Friday afternoons. And we are continuing with both of those, but we're going to begin issuing those on Mondays after this week. So not only will this help the media in getting information out because who doesn't love a good Friday afternoon drop of amazingsness, but this will allow staff more time to prepare the reports and give us time to respond to the public and the media's questions during the week after they're released. To allow some time for everybody to make that change, we will release one final report this Friday and then move to Mondays beginning August 17, so that means there will not be a report issued next week.

And then finally, in addition to my day job as Acting Director, I'm also the operations section chief under our incident command system. And I'd like to give you just a little peek behind the curtain on what does that look like. So currently under the operations section, I'm the section chief and then I have five branch managers under me. That includes, we have an epidemiology branch, a case investigations branch, a testings branch, a special populations branch which focuses on long term care, first responders and corrections, and then our final branch covers schools, child cares and camps. So by breaking up our operational structure to better focus on these specific buckets of work, we're better able to plug in people and resources to make sure we're giving each of those sections its need because they are big buckets of work. And we have some great people working on those now. So that's all I have. So I'll turn it back over to Executive Somers

**Dave Somers:** Thank you, Katie. Any questions? I don't see any in our chat box yet.

**Joint Information Center:** Thank you Katie and executive Somers. This is Kari in the Joint Information Center. I'd like to give it a minute or two in case people are still typing in their questions. So if you do have a question, please submit it to everyone using the chat feature.

**Dave Somers:** Last chance. Oh, Katie a question for you. Can you give us an update on hospital and average daily counts versus the goals?

**Katie Curtis:** Yes, so I don't have that right at my fingertips. But I can say that we are watching the hospitalization rates in the county and we have seen that trend upwards a little bit. They're averaging about 20 to 30 patients. And so it is something we are keeping our eye on. And I can say our administrator Shawn Frederick and our health officer Dr. Spitters are in contact with hospital leadership in the county to make sure that we're understanding what those admits are for.

**Dave Somers:** And I was looking at the numbers earlier for our two-week running average and we saw a little decrease in the daily numbers last week. And that's reflected in the rolling average. It looks to me to be either flat now, which is great because it has been trending up for many, many weeks, either flat or a slight decline. So I think that was some good news, but we have to see over a number of days and weeks if we sustain that. But hopefully we're on a declining trend. Stay tuned.

**Dave Somers:** Any other questions.

**Joint Information Center:** This is Kari in the Joint Information Center. I'm not seeing any other questions at this time. We will go ahead and wrap up early today. Thank you all so much for joining us, and please do stay tuned for future media availabilities. Thanks.

**Dave Somers:** Thank you.