

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive: Good morning, everybody. Good to see you all, thanks for joining us today, just really want to start . This morning by noting the yesterday was the seven year anniversary of the SR530 landslide- it was really a disaster that struck at the heart of the silly valley and . Our county and took 43 lives, and I remember the day well and I got the phone call from our emergency management director that there had been an event out there and. had no idea, the magnitude . But we really need to remember here in Snohomish county and across the region, all the losses that were suffered and must not forget them, it really showed us and in times of need people come together and people come to our aid, so we might have sold every year that there's a long road to recovery . And we also need to remember an honor our losses, but we also need to remember that, from that tragedy came partnerships and experiences that It really helped us be better prepared for the COVID 19 pandemic or emergency management system with step for quite some time during the 530 landslide event and . Frankly, it was stronger after that, and for that, so we just want to remember our those losses and honor them and be grateful for being better prepared because of them so we're starting to see the horizon, I hope, on this pandemic we . continue to vaccinate more people every day, and we are advocating at the state federal level for more vaccine to come from the state and federal government . Yesterday we entered phase three of reopening and by the end of the month, many, many, many were where people will be eligible for vaccine so that's all good news . We do have a ways to go, and I know, Dr splitters will be addressing this here this morning . Our long term care facilities also are starting to see visitors again again I spoke with leadership at Providence yesterday and . Other still seeing cases they're seeing seeing fewer critical care cases so that's good news and we just really want to keep that progress going we're not going to be able to enjoy regular rhythms life for some time, but we are making progress, and I think everybody can sense that . Just in mind being mindful all those we've lost a COVID 19 and all that are still a risk, we really have to stay strong and diligent . About wearing masks and keeping our physical distance and being careful so we're not through this yet we're making good progress . But we really come too far to let down our guard, so I urge everybody to continue to be safe, where your masks . Be careful we're not through this yet we've got a ways to go and we don't want to turn around now and then turn around their progress so without all hand it over to Dr spinners from the so much health district.

Dr. Chris Spitters: Thank you Executive Somers good morning everyone, and my initial setup here so today, I have a few slides with numbers and images that I'd like to share so going to share my screen here for just a minute. And so, this shows are rolling two week case rate, you can see it's it came down. In sort of two phases first very rapidly there through January and early part of February and sort of a slowing of decline, which is expected. But now we've kind of it looks like maybe we bought them down through Saturday the 13th we were at 70 cases per hundred thousand per two weeks, and then through this past Saturday that the 20th of March. Similar figure 72 so you know flat, at best, maybe a slight uptick. statewide aggregate counts show a similar plateauing of case rates in recent weeks and King county data also shows a slight increase over the recent weeks. So, moving into phase three and expanding occupancy and activities is great news for all of us. But we also want to stay in Phase three and continue to progress, so that means we need everyone is executive summary mentioned vaccinated or not to keep up the prevention measures. I know people are tired of covert I certainly am and the team at the health district, although we stay on it every day it's been a long haul for all of us and for all of you. But we're

getting we're getting close but we're not there yet until then we really need three w's wearing a mask watching your distance. And washing your hands and I throw in a V there to be for ventilation when you're indoors with folks that aren't from your home keep the windows doors screen doors open when you're writing in a vehicle crack the windows, at least if weather permits keep moving keep the air moving. So to that point I want to bring up one area where we've seen a growing number of cases in recent days and that's in sports settings and schools in particular. Within the last week, our school outreach team has investigated at least six cases that played or practice on school sports teams, while contagious. Since the beginning of the year we've had cases associated with numerous sports, including football volleyball soccer swimming basketball hockey and softball as well as general weight training. And you know be as as sports move from outdoors to indoors that's riskier as well as when competitors or practices. participants are you know close together so keeping things outside and spread out is best and schools, teachers and students are doing a great job with prevention measures in the classroom and we also think. That that players coaches and families are doing that, outside the classroom, particularly on the playing field on the Court, etc. But the impression we're getting from these contact investigations that have followed these cases and their contacts, is that. Like findings from elsewhere around the country related to sporting outbreaks it's often that the breakdown and prevention is happening amongst teammates off the field. or court, for example in locker rooms on the bus or in a carpool to and from games congregating and talking without masks and the parking lot. When breaking for snacks or water and get together social get together. outside of the sporting event itself among teammates so just a reminder that those are all areas that we got to keep up your guard 24 700% of the time. With your your teammates and fellow participants match should be worn when you're around people you don't live with spread out in a bus limit carpools when available keep the windows cracked. wash your hands use hand sanitizer frequently, as well as sanitizing high touch surfaces like door handle seat belts steering wheel cell phones and in sports the equipment that's being used. So I want to move on to our next slide one last piece on some data and that's updates on how often will be releasing some data components moving forward. starting next week will be scaling back the reporting of new cases from daily to weekly the daily counts, especially the first day or two that they come out for a particular date so today's. Accounting of yesterday's reported cases is incomplete and essentially meaningless we don't really see those numbers stabilizing for several days to a week anyway so. they're kind of meaningless so in order to permit our staff to to focus on higher order priorities we're just going to go to do that, once a week. And those will now come out on Mondays along with the weekly case rate what I just showed you. And next of those on our website on the case count page or hospitalizations long term care and mortality rates that a lot continue to be updated once a week. The bi weekly every two week reports and maps that we've been doing those will now move to a monthly we're just not seeing. actionable changes on the two week timeline to merit the in the investment of the epidemiologist time when there's other things like. Some of the vaccine work that that we want to focus their time on so that'll be slowing down, but not stopping. And, of course, will be keeping an eye on the numbers all the time and if something occurs between a report that has disease control significance for the Community will certainly bring it up and let you all know, the rest of the reports and graphs will remain as is. Moving to. Talking about changes moving to testing we announced last Friday in our press release that the original testing site operated by the health district on [Broadway] and ever will be moving later this week. Today, March 23, in addition to the anniversary of the also landslide that executive Somers mentioned also marks one year since our site at that 3900. Testing

facility opened Little did we know we'd still be here a year later we're deeply grateful to every public schools for allowing us to use its lower parking lot at their headquarters and for its continued support with new testing. As the county moves into phase three and spectator events are permitted the health district needed to move this test site near flamenco field, so that every public schools and the aqua SOx have parking for both the stadium. memorial stadium and phone cofield our last day of operations at that site will be this Thursday March 25. And we're grateful that the school district is allowing us to use another property nearby, also known as the longfellow enix on beginning Friday March 26 that's located at 3715 oaks avenue in every. Okay last I want to just make some comments about vaccines on the vaccine front, we continue to make promise progress with promise of further progress in the future. Through last week 188,000 Snohomish county residents that's 23% had initiated vaccination and 110,000 or 13% had completed vaccination in the three months since efforts in that direction started. If, in the end that's there were using the entire county population of 830,000 to say 23% started 13% finished, if we look at specific. Eligibility groups it's much better than that, for instance, among adults over 65 about two thirds have initiated, and I think about 35 or 40% have completed in that highest risk group that that's at the front end of the vaccine priority list. Even with improving supply as we're seeing it will take quite some time to get Snohomish county fully vaccinated our goal remains to achieve complete vaccination of all eligible individuals who want to be vaccinated. Applying national estimates suggesting that up to 80% of adults either definitely or might want to be interested in getting vaccinated. Then that and then a target figure of about 600,000 adults represents 90% saturation of that group of adults definitely or maybe interested in getting vaccinated. So, moving toward that 600,000 which is not the end of the effort but it's a milestone that we're Trying to achieve the speed at which we make progress is largely dependent on supply, given that our current administration capacity through the counties mass vaccination sites and other vaccine providers. exceeds the supply looking at future allocations between state allocations to providers, like the health district, the mass sites and then Community clinics and other healthcare facilities. and adding in federal allocations directly to retail pharmacies that don't go through the state or the county they just go straight to local pharmacies, we can anticipate almost 50,000 doses. coming in weekly over the coming months and with some promise of further increases coming from the governor and the Federal Government in comments in the last week or two. So at that pace we would reach that target of 600,000 fully vaccinated adults by approximately mid August so roughly five months from now, four to five months from now. If the supply is less say 35,000 let, for instance, this figure I calculated assume that we get 10,000 doses of Johnson and Johnson vaccine. coming in over the long haul we're not getting those yet we got a little bit in the beginning of the month, none for the rest of the month as. The manufacturers building up supply and distribution, but we should start seeing that again in May, but let's say that didn't come just as a scenario and we're down around. 35 36,000 doses per week, then our target figure of 600,000 fully vaccinated adults, would not be reached until mid October. And under a worst case scenario let's say we're all we had are the 25,000 doses coming to the county providers and let's say the retail pharmacy program stopped retail pharmacies are currently getting about 10 to 15,000 doses, a week directly from the Federal Government. Then it would take us out until the end of the year to reach that 600,000 so. These are just hypothetical scenarios, to give you an idea of the pace at which we can achieve our goals, given. You know, broad ranges on anticipated vaccine supply, but even under the best case scenario, this is going to take several months. So although all adults, will become eligible for a vaccination on May one in Snohomish county Washington state in the United States it's going to take

many, many months for us to get through all those folks. So, again we present this for three key reasons, as I said, to demonstrate what supply levels, we need to get to in order to hit those national goals of all adults getting vaccinated by this summer, which is basically 50,000 plus doses coming to various settings in the county every week. We also want to help explain that that timeline is why we all need to be patient as we wait to get a vaccine. Demands still far outweighs the supply with right now, this week we've got about 10 or 15 eligible candidates for every dose that's available. So that doesn't mean stop trying, it means keep trying, but be patient and know that your turn will come, even if it doesn't come this week next week or even the week after if you stay in there, each week the odds of getting. an appointment, improve and then last but certainly not least, is to let folks know that we have some time before we're out of the woods here with Kovac transmission. 20 25% of the population, starting vaccination or 15% fully vaccinated is not enough to interrupt transmission substantially so, particularly with these new strains. Arriving and expanding their share of the amount of virus that's that's going around and they're more transmissible. You know, we really need to keep our guard up so that we can keep these case rates low stay in Phase three keep kids in school and get through the next four to six months or possibly longer if supplies are good. Without going through a big you know way of number four with hospitalizations and deaths and all that that we've been through before. So with that I urge and plead for your continued excellent efforts to reduce transmission in your homes workplaces and where you you do get together with others and so with that I'll turn it back to executive suffers.

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive: Thank you doctor and started on the questions so since for you, what does the update on variance in Snohomish county how many and which ones are here how many are right of the Board King county. And what is the data showing regarding these variants of any changes needed protocol for high risk residents.

Dr. Chris Spitters: well.

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive: So, Dr is the budding bottoming out of cases and slight uptick any indication of a fourth wave or you expect vaccinations to overcome the uptick.

Dr. Chris Spitters: Well, you know we've now been through this several times, we know why and how it happens. And so it's really in our hands, so I'd say let's see how the next few weeks ago and see whether we're able to keep that flat or, even better, yet further push it down or are we going to have to sustain another increase and All the consequences associated with that I really think it's in our hands, and you know but. it's hard to predict what the final score is going to be looking at the scoreboard at halftime, so to speak, but you know. Things are looking good and the other team is catching up, so to speak, so I'd say it's time for us to really double down on all those efforts to at least keep things level and try to push them down further.

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive: and Dr a point you made earlier is the current level and vaccinations, though we wouldn't expect that to be enough to really prevent another uptick Is that correct.

Dr. Chris Spitters: I think that's right Executive Somerthe range of estimates on what proportion of the population needs to be immune to interrupt transmission of the virus, also known as herd immunity that that percentage of the total population. Estimates have ranged from as low as 25% up to 80 to 90% with the majority of being up in that 75 80% zone so we're. Even if you add in all of the cases that have occurred and all the immunized folks work, you know, at best, around 25 30% of the population with some level of immunity and that's not enough to permit us to let our guard down.

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive: Now, and then outside of you sports, have you seen a significant increase in cases among younger demographics and, if so, can you provide any numbers on that and whether it factors, would you expect to be contributing to rising younger cases such as they've seen in grant county recently.

Dr. Chris Spitters: Yes, so through our last report we had not seen increases in young adults, which you as you're recalling the prior waves, two and three. That was the leading edge of the of the pandemic in the Community were adults 20 to 39 years of age, King county excuse me that the state of Washington has reported that they've seen a slight increase among that age group we haven't seen it yet in our data analyzed through. That would have been the 13th was our last report we'll have another report coming up here through the 27th that will release next week, I hope we don't see it but, honestly I won't be surprised if we do, because it's happening elsewhere. I think this is probably a. You know, a behavioral or activity related thing with younger adults with the weather, improving. You know, maybe gatherings increasing. for whatever reason, social sports what have you possibly you know we'll see his face three rolls out whether any of the, you know, occupational activity is leading to some of this, although our outbreaks in workplace settings are way down off the peak and haven't started to come up. So you know those are the two key ingredients that social you know private gatherings and workplaces that's where young people tend to. tend to be close quarters with others, so you know it's a, it is a call on our on our all of us, but especially our younger adults to try to endure and stick with the recommendations.

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive: Okay, another question regarding plateau is the flattening of Plato considered a good thing, because cases are no longer going to up or bad thing, because they're no longer declining Could you elaborate a bit more.

Dr. Chris Spitters: Well it's a fair question that you know. glass half empty glass half full, you know I certainly want us that the further we can push things down the more margin for error, we have. Should these strains you know prove to be more problematic these various strains that are emerging if they proved to be more problematic than we anticipate in terms of severity or. Just you know I guess saying susceptibility to the immune reaction provoked by the vaccine right, you know, the lower the better gives us more room so. You know 70s, better than 135 is better than 70 that's that's Michael let's keep getting it down yeah.

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive: I guess from my standpoint, you know, we obviously want to get back under 25 or hopefully someday to zero. **Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive:** And that's the goal and it's the level in the leveling off is enough to cause concerned and to remind us that

the virus is still out there it's still being transmitted. **Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive:** And if we don't keep our protective measures in place, we could easily go back up into another wave, such as they're seeing, and I think over 21 other states. **Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive:** In the US are seeing upticks and places in Europe are seeing uptake so we just got to be careful we got to keep vaccinating and kind of hold the line on this it's so I'd say the plateau is concerning it's not. A disaster, yet, but it's just a reminder. **Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive:** Oka, can you address the possibility of adding the Astera Zenica vaccine to the supply and what do you think that might help the county mutates capacity and how about the effect of j&j now saying it might not meet the production level we were expecting.

Dr. Chris Spitters: More vaccine is good, so you know investors gets approved and becomes available, then that adds to our supply and it adds. Also stability if the more products that are out there than the less likely than an interruption in production or distribution. of a single product is to wreak havoc on our overall approach, so you know, a broad portfolio of products on the on the market and available to us is a good thing and it helps us manage the risks of those so that would be welcome news. But, but that you know the details on the timeline for that sort of thing, as you know, still in the hands of. Of FDA and the manufacturer to work that through but presumably they'll be applying for any way and get it get approved and then CDC will make recommendations and it'll move on, just as it has for the other maxine's. You know problem with Johnson and Johnson production or with distribution with any of the products is going to set us back a little and, as I said, the more the broader the palette of products, we have available to us, the less susceptible are responsible be so. Executive Somersyou're muted.

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive: On your now So is requesting get the numbers of doses coming to the county this week in both the regular allotment and through the federal pharmacy program okay.

Dr. Chris Spitters: So we've been a lot of. Its 26,000 doses will be coming to. vaccine providers, including the mass back sites that's Pfizer moderna know j&j I can give specifics on that's just the allocation we've been that account county has been allotted and. You know the distribution of that within the county is still getting worked out that gets worked out over the course of the week. And then the federal pharmacy allocation we don't see that in real time for the current week we always see the prior week so two weeks ago it was 11,000 last week it was 14,000 I anticipate it continuing to be somewhere in that 10 to 15,000 range going forward.

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive: It seems like it's easier than ever to get the vaccine, with new tools from the state plus boosted supply is the August vaccine timeline perhaps conservatives.

Dr. Chris Spitters: I it's just dependent on supply and then it at some point of supply became so great, then the rate limiting step would be our ability to administer it. You may recall, back in the very beginning, we had more vaccine and capacity to administer now we've got more capacity to administer than then vaccine. But you know I think you know 50,000 doses, a week is kind of in the in the strike zone of where what the federal government is telling us if this applies augmented you know proportionally roughly

proportionally if it's. let's say it's 50% greater than we expect and we end up getting \$75,000 a week and we're able to administer all those it would roughly take two thirds, the amount of time, so instead of five months it might be, you know, four months three and a half or four months.

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive: I guess I just add that the scheduling system, I know, was frustrating earlier on, and it's getting better for individuals, but that was never the bottleneck and getting vaccines was difficult on people to try to get an appointment, but we were able to deliver all the vaccines we were getting and that remains the case. And we have the capacity to give more vaccine shots than we have vaccine and that's been the case since day one, we expect that to remain the case so systems better, but that isn't really going to determine. When we reach the 600,000 that were kind of our first goal really that's really his doctor said is dependent on how much vaccine we get and how soon. Does it department health take any input from the county and health district when deciding who is in each vaccine eligibility phase, or to the county and health district find out when the public does how hard has it been to plan when new groups are added two phases.

Dr. Chris Spitters: So yes, the department does seek the local health jurisdictions input prior to finalizing its allocations and. How hard, is it to plan when new groups are added two phases well you know it's it. In one in one hand when we add when we expand. The eligible pool the extreme of that will be on may 1 when presumably all adults or everyone over 16 is eligible in the county in a way that simplifies things right because. You don't really have to figure out whether you're eligible or not so, but what it does do is it increases the ratio of. demand to supply, and so I think that that's frankly it's harder on those who are eligible because, as you become eligible there's. that's an uplifting thing and there's hope but you know, the chances of you getting up to bat within the next week or not. Not as high as they are and that, compared to your chance of getting vaccinated sometime in the next two months, say, so I think that that actually is a good thing that we're trying to move through this quickly and you know, in a way it really does simplify things. But it, but it does make the ratio of demand to supply a challenge, because you know there's only so many slots right now per week on only so many doses per week, so I think that the harder burden of the acceleration falls on the consumers.

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive: And I just say the thing that made it difficult to plan it's just not knowing how much vaccine we're going to get week to week know each of the sites is staffed by volunteers stamped by professionals. People have to be mobilized and so it's very difficult if we don't know in advance how much vaccine we're going to get whether we should stand up a site and, should it be for one day two days, three days, etc, so that's been the difficulty. The number of people that are eligible less so, it is possible, we could get overwhelmed with people sometimes, but again it's going to be the vaccine doses, and the allocation that we have that's going to be the limiting factor, because of the difficulties.: So, you would think vaccinating the most vulnerable.: In the hospital system would really dampen the severity of the fourth way of Is that correct. Dr home just leave it there.

Dr. Chris Spitters: Well, I think, just you know recent history shows the vaccinating the long term care facilities, in particular the residence and the stand. which I think statewide roughly about 90% of the residents. got vaccinated about two thirds of the stand that has been enough to essentially eliminate in

the current moment long term care facilities as a key player in the pandemic, they account for about 20% of the hospitalizations and 50% of the deaths also all of those in the residents with a few staff so you know proof positive right there and the impact of vaccination on that so, for instance, if we had another way of now. The I think the immunity from that would outlast that way, then we wouldn't see I think we'd, if nothing else, changed we'd see. In that subsequent wave if it was otherwise like a wave number three you'd see about 50% fewer deaths and 20% fewer hospitalizations. So it's an improvement, but it's not it doesn't shut the door on the negative impacts of the of the virus on the Community and the other thing to keep in mind is that even among. Those who don't have severe disease now as we look more and more and see data coming out about people who, three, six months after having recovered still have difficulty breathing short of breath going up the stairs difficulty concentrating and up to up to a third or a half of. People had COPD and so it's really you know we've not only want to prevent the hospitalizations and desk but even just the cases because of the impact they have on individuals down the line.

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive: So as more people get back to you they're going to want to stop wearing masks and public, given that again in private and then the second issue calls for calls from vaccine passports are likely to rise, what do you make of the prospects of that and it, let me jump in on this one, just to start because I get this question a lot about vaccine passports. And you know growing up through my years it was very common to have to have some documentation of vaccinations to travel around the world in different countries that's not unusual. has been common practice in the past, and I fully expect that to be part of our future that many, many countries for entry or for travel. Dave Somers will ask for documentation of vaccines and I think it's probably more difficult and harder at a local level we're not used to that either within a state or across states, but certainly travel to Canada or Mexico, I would not be at least bit surprised and I don't think it would be you know really out of past practice to do so on asking for proof of vaccination. Dr you want to add to that?

Dr. Chris Spitters: No, I never really I agree, I think you nailed it with That said, it makes a lot of sense for international travel, it becomes a lot less clear in terms of. Effectiveness enforceability and equity when you know whether you know it applies to go into restaurants so . not certain that will see it operating at that low yeah.

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive: Any new data on vaccinations for kids under the age of 16 is there a timeline for when the vaccination effort will move to that age bracket.

Dr. Chris Spitters: Nothing formal you that there are clinical trials on your way not 've heard in the popular press. That you know, maybe sometime in the fall or the winter of. We might be seeing that that coming forth but that's all I have on.

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive: You have a recommendation for playdates and younger age children, what is advised and non biased.

Dr. Chris Spitters: Well, I just follow the guidance so. You know and have to think that, through we might want to come up with something more formal but you know if you're. Two households Max what is it five

or 10 people I guess 10 people now in Phase three two households Max three households. I'd have to check on the social gatherings part of that well I think we'll get back to you, but the main ideas. While kids occasionally can have severe disease or that post infectious mix. Multi system inflammatory syndrome, the real concern is who they're going to spread it to, even though they aren't really efficient transmitters especially outside the home so trying to keep it to one household or two households getting together at a time, I think is a good idea and. If the. older adults, if the adults in that home are vulnerable I would think about that think twice about doing that, until those older adults in. The participating homes have been vaccinated.

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive: So last question on treatment and especially for severe cases is there a promising medication and are better outcomes and early in a pandemic: Such as deserve new talk early treatment for high risk people with antivirals early antivirals it's like.

Dr. Chris Spitters: Well, or invasive year has a. has a positive impact it's partial impact so it's not like say when you have an ammonia and you get antibiotics, you know cure rates. way above 90% this is sort of like partial reduction in need for mechanical ventilation partial reduction in depth, so that people you know if I end up with COVID in the hospital and on oxygen you know it seems. This is a little bit out of my out of my wheelhouse but you know the data and recommendations seem to say that corticosteroids to decrease inflammation in the lungs and the rest of the body some anticoagulation to prevent clotting and rim desert beer to have antiviral effects. You know all of those along with just the. More experience in dealing with this infection in hospitals. You know better outcomes less need for mechanical ventilation less death, but not any you know elimination or not even a. You know reduction say by 50% it's really the kind of thing like 1020 30% reduction in various bad outcomes so that's where we're at so it's it helps. folks who are hospitalized benefit from that but it's not uniform in terms or you know 100% or anything really close to that and just speaking to the best way to you know survive the COVID pandemic is to not get it, and so, for now, that means prevention practices and vaccination.

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive: I think that wraps us up.

Joint Information Center: This is Kristen in the joint information Center. Thank you again for joining us today and for all of your questions we're going to go ahead and wrap up please stay tuned for future media availabilities.