



## MASON COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES

Building, Planning, Environmental Health, Community Health

*From the Office of The Mason County Health Officer  
Daniel Stein, M.D.*

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Dear Mason County,

I am happy to report that we have been granted a variance to move forward to Phase 2 of Governor Inslee's Safe Start. Over the next few days, we will be seeing the reopening of some of our essential economy. Expanding access to these services and allowing people to get back to work will allow our community to resume some of our normal activities.

The decision to apply for this variance was challenging. The goal of the initial Stay Home, Stay Healthy guidance was to "flatten the curve," prepare our medical system, and accumulate protective equipment. I believe that our medical system is now much more prepared for any potential surge in cases that may still occur.

However, we continue to see new cases throughout our county, and I want to emphasize the need to be cautious with our next steps. Even though we are now allowing some businesses to start operating, I strongly encourage people to continue to avoid as much close contact with others outside of the household as possible. I highly encourage the consistent practices of social distancing, especially for those people who are at higher risk such as those with other health conditions or individuals over 65. Because this step forward means that people will have more contact with one another, I have two asks of our community.

First, I recommend that all individuals wear a cloth or surgical mask over their mouth and nose whenever out in public. Evidence shows that consistent use of masks can reduce the transmission of the virus. Because of this virus' relatively unique ability to spread from asymptomatic individuals, everyone should assume that they may be infected and take precautions to protect the people around them.

My second request comes in response to our need to promote rapid case and contact investigations. In Mason County, people are taking an average of a week or more to get tested after developing symptoms. This delay can produce significant risk to the public and delay essential containment actions. In order to avoid future outbreaks, we rely on rapid isolation of positive cases and quarantine of their close contacts. I ask that anyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19 contact their physician and get tested as soon as possible.

Mason County has been given a great opportunity to show that we can reopen portions of our economy in a safe and effective manner. We will continue to monitor the situation very closely in order to restrict person-to-person contact or take any other necessary measures if we start to see an increase in symptoms or more outbreaks in our community. Thank you, Mason County, for your hard work.

Sincerely,

Daniel Stein, M.D., Mason County Health Officer