



## ISLAND COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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### PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

### STATEMENT REGARDING COVID-19

Island County, September 10, 2021

## Many Washington state hospitals are over capacity

Governor Jay Inslee announced at his press conference yesterday that on Monday, September 13, 2021, face masks are required at large outdoor events with 500 or more attendees. He also discussed how most hospitals in our state are over capacity due to COVID-19 patients.

Island County has watched the number of COVID cases increase and it is affecting our healthcare system as well. Here is a statement from WhidbeyHealth:

“WhidbeyHealth fully supports the efforts and planning of our local and state health jurisdictions. We have seen increased volumes of patients experiencing acute upper respiratory illness symptoms at both our Emergency Department and at our Walk-In Clinics in Clinton and Oak Harbor. The Medical Center in Coupeville currently has nearly 20% of its inpatient beds occupied with COVID positive patients receiving care. While WhidbeyHealth has not been at capacity consistently, we are currently experiencing a higher-than-average patient capacity. In response, we are looking to convert an isolated portion of our post-anesthesia care area into a dedicated space to care for COVID positive patients. To ensure that WhidbeyHealth is in the best position to continue care for our community, close to home, we are making these kinds of preparations – aligned and scaled with the capacity and crisis standards of care plan being developed by the WA Department of Health.

As a critical access hospital in a rural community, this challenge is frightening. Major healthcare institutions all along the I-5 corridor have been near capacity or on divert (where they can no longer take additional patients) for much of the last three months.

This is what everything means for our community: we have had multiple patients triaged through our Emergency Department in the past few months who remained in our ED for multiple days until an available bed could be found at another facility for advanced specialty care. If your loved one experienced a cardiac event and was stabilized by WhidbeyHealth, wouldn't you want them to receive the immediate specialized care they needed? If hospital capacity continues to be stressed and stretched not everyone will be able to receive care when they need it the most.

WhidbeyHealth would like to ask our community to do their part to ensure that treatment and care remain available. Please continue to mask, socially distance, and practice good hygiene. If you have yet to be vaccinated and plan to, please do so. If you are not vaccinating, please consider it for the larger impact on our local and state healthcare.”

If you need help finding a place to get your COVID-19 vaccine, the state's [Vaccine Locator](#) website is a great resource. Those who need further help can call the COVID-19 Information Hotline at **1-800-525-0127**, then press #. Language assistance is available.

If you have questions or concerns about COVID-19 in Island County, start by visiting our [website](#) or our [Facebook](#) page. The Island County call center may be reached at **360-678-2301**; Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm.