

HEALTH MATTERS



Island County COVID Response Community Guidance



MELISSA HARTMANN, at left, infection prevention specialist for Island County COVID Response, answers questions about COVID-19 and rapid home testing during National Night Out on Aug. 2 in Oak Harbor.

COVID Response hands out 720 rapid tests at Night Out

Team successfully tries out 'test-and-go' during event

Under sunny skies, with a breeze skimming off of Oak Harbor Bay, Island County COVID Response took the continuing battle against COVID-19 to Windjammer Park this

week.

During [National Night Out](#), held Tuesday, Aug. 2 in Oak Harbor, the COVID Response team distributed a total of 720 rapid home tests and administered two 'test-and-go' rapid tests.

"While many event attendees took home the free test kits, it was encouraging to hear many people say that they were already well stocked," said

See **FREE**, page 2



SUSAN WAGNER, Public Health branch manager for the Island County COVID Response Team, distributed free tests and COVID-19 information to people attending National Night Out on Aug. 2.

FREE: *Island County COVID Response hands out rapid tests*

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Keven Graves, public information officer for Island County COVID Response. “People we talked to are clearly taking COVID-19 seriously, and are eager to do their part to prevent its spread.”

“I really enjoyed dispensing the home test kits and providing updated information to the public,” said Susan Wagner, Public Health branch manager for COVID Response.

“Some of the information provided was about where and how often members of the public can order tests from the state and federal governments, the importance of having home test kits at home before you get sick and when to use them.”

Many people explained that they are indeed taking advantage of the free rapid test kits available through the state website sayyescovidhometest.org and federal website covid.gov/tests.

The state’s website allows residents to place two free orders of five tests per household each month — a total of 10 tests.

The federal website allows people to order up to eight test kits. The tests arrive in two separate packages, four tests per package, and ship free.

“Many people had questions about testing when exposed to COVID-19 versus testing for symptoms such as cough, runny nose and other respiratory symptoms,” Wagner said. “COVID-19 information has changed over the course of the pandemic.”

In fact, many people weren’t aware that the expiration dates for many of the rapid home tests have been extended. For example, the iHealth tests handed out by the COVID Response Team were recently extended six months beyond the expiration date stamped on the boxes.

To learn if your home test kits expiration has been extended, go online to www.fda.gov/media/158007/download for updated information.

“National Night Out provided a great forum to be available to the public to answer any

See **NIGHT OUT**, page 11



OMICRON BA.5

Protect yourself. Protect others.

You're doing great! Don't let down your guard.
Stay safe by continuing to:

- Take a rapid home test before gathering or traveling
- Keep COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters up to date
- Gather safely, preferably outdoors
- Mask up in crowded spaces
- Wash your hands with soap and water
- If you're sick, STAY HOME!

Get free at-home test kits online at

www.sayyescovidhometest.org and www.covid.gov/tests



Contact Island County COVID Response if you are symptomatic and want to be tested, are planning a large event and need home-test kits, or to get more information about protecting yourself against COVID-19.

Call 360-678-2301. Hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday



WASHINGTON STATE Department of Health recently launched a new telehealth option for COVID-19 patients.

DOH now offering COVID-19 telehealth consultations

To increase access to potentially life-saving medication to treat COVID-19, the Washington State Department of Health, or DOH, and its partners have launched a new telehealth option for patients.

The option expands the federal [Test to Treat](#) initiative and gives people at risk of severe disease another way to quickly access free treatment for COVID-19.

Until now, telehealth for COVID-19 has only been available to insured patients who receive care through a health care provider that offers telehealth visits.

The new program makes telehealth consultations for COVID-19 available to everyone, regardless of insurance status, with no out-of-pocket costs.

“At DOH, we value equity and innovation, and have embraced those values throughout our COVID-19 response,” said Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH, Secretary of Health.

“Ensuring that we can equitably connect communities with therapeutics is pivotal so that we can continue our mission of reducing unnecessary death from this disease.”

DOH encourages people who test positive for COVID-19 to discuss treatment options with their primary health care provider. In situations where this might not be possible, free telehealth consultations can make it even easier to access treatments for COVID-19.

People who test positive for COVID-19, including with a self-test, can consult with a health care provider

using a smartphone or computer with a high-speed internet connection. If appropriate, they can receive a free prescription for pick-up at a nearby pharmacy that has the oral antivirals or have their medication delivered. More than 1,000 sites are available across the state.

The telehealth service is currently provided by DOH in collaboration with partners, including Birds Eye Medical and Color Health.

There are two options to set up a telehealth appointment – either by visiting DOH’s [new telehealth web page](#) or by calling the DOH COVID-19 call center. Those interested in signing up virtually can complete a brief intake form on DOH’s new telehealth web page.

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IF DEEMED appropriate by a doctor, patients using a new DOH telehealth option may be prescribed potentially life-saving drugs such as Paxlovid.

DOH: *Telehealth option expands access*

Continued from page 4

If the information provided indicates treatment may be appropriate, the patient will be connected virtually with a health care provider for a consultation.

Telehealth providers are available every day from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. To make an appointment, call the DOH COVID-19 call center at 1-800-525-0127 and press #. The call center is open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays, and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays and state holidays.

Telehealth appointments are currently available in 240 languages through translation services. People interested in receiving a telehealth appointment in a language other than English should arrange an appointment through the DOH COVID-19 call

center.

One of the most effective COVID-19 treatments is [Paxlovid](#), an oral antiviral drug that reduces the risk of hospitalization by approximately 90 percent.

Oral antivirals like Paxlovid are only available by prescription and must be started within five days of first symptoms to prevent severe illness and hospitalization from COVID-19.

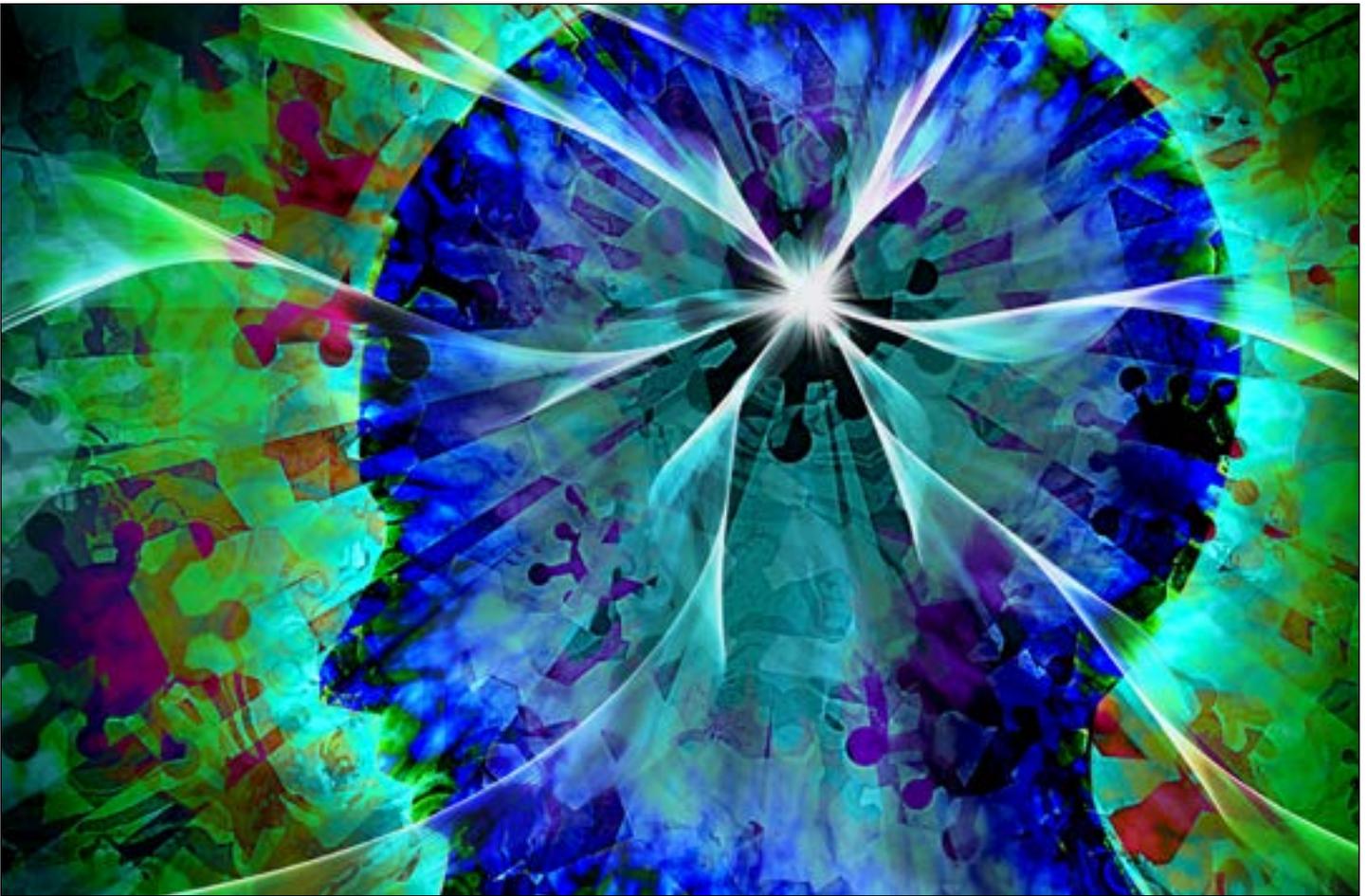
“Our goal is for all eligible patients at high risk for severe disease to have equitable access to life-saving COVID-19 treatments,” said Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett, MD, MPH, chief science officer.

“We’re excited to make this service free to everyone with no out of pocket costs so that even those without insurance will be able to access antiviral medications,” he said. “And by offering

telehealth consultations in multiple languages, the program increases access for non-English speakers as well.”

Oral antivirals are an important treatment for people who are at high risk of hospitalization. People at high risk include those 65 years old or older, obese, pregnant, have chronic medical conditions such as heart, lung, or kidney disease, or people who are taking immunosuppressant treatments. Children as young as 12 years old with certain chronic conditions and who weigh at least 88 pounds may also be eligible for antiviral treatment. Learn more about what may place people at [high risk for COVID-19](#).

Visit the Washington State Department of Health’s website for [more information on COVID-19 treatments](#) and [information for health care providers](#).



AT THE direction of President Joe Biden, two reports were developed that look at ways to address Long COVID.

HHS-led studies look at Long COVID

In April, President Joe Biden issued a [Memorandum on Addressing the Long-Term Effects of COVID-19](#), which called for the creation of two reports. Within 120 days, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or HHS, leading a whole-of-government response, developed two reports that together, pave an actionable path forward to address Long COVID and associated conditions.

The National Research Action Plan on Long COVID details advances in current research and charts a course for future study to better understand prevention and treatment of Long COVID.

The Services and Supports for Longer-Term Impacts of COVID-19 report highlights resources for health care workers, and those effected by broader effects of COVID-19, including not only Long COVID but also effects on

mental health and substance use, and loss of caregivers and loved ones.

“Long COVID can hinder an individual’s ability to work, attend school, participate in community life, and engage in everyday activities,” said HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra. “As our nation continues to make strides in the fight against COVID-19, these reports are critical to shine a light on Long COVID’s impact and how to match people to resources.”

“The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to combating and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic with the full capacity of the federal government,” said HHS Assistant Secretary for Health ADM Rachel Levine. “These initial reports are an important step as HHS continues to accelerate research and programmatic support to address the consequences of the pandemic and

work across sectors to ensure no one is left behind as we continue to build a healthier future.”

People with Long COVID have disease symptoms that persist for weeks or months after acute COVID-19 infection. It remains difficult to measure precisely, but an [estimated 7.7 to 23 million Americans have developed Long COVID](#), and roughly one million people may be out of the workforce at any given time due to the condition—equivalent to about \$50 billion in lost earnings annually.

The [National Research Action Plan on Long COVID](#) (the Research Plan), created in coordination with 14 government departments and agencies, introduces the first U.S. government-wide national research agenda focused

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Long Covid

Chronic Tiredness and Exhaustion (Fatigue)

Sleep Disorder

Inability to Concentrate

Headaches

Hair Loss

Depression

Anxiety

Loss of Taste and Smell

Sore Throat and Cough

Shortness of Breath

Muscle Weakness

Palpitations

LONG COVID may result in a myriad of symptoms that persist long after you have recovered from COVID-19.

HHS: Studies take look at Long COVID

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on advancing prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and provision of services and supports for individuals and families experiencing Long COVID.

The Research Plan stresses four guiding principles to govern federal government data analysis work: health equity, accelerating and expanding current research, orienting the research effort to improve patient care, and partner engagement.

The plan demonstrates innovation in early achievements and highlights the importance of collaboration between the public and private sectors to advance prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and provision of health care, public health, and human services for individuals experiencing Long COVID.

The [Services and Supports for](#)

[Longer-Term Impacts of COVID-19](#)

Report (Services Report) outlines federal services available to the American public to address longer-term effects of COVID-19, including Long COVID and related conditions, as well as other impacts on individuals and families.

The Services Report provides valuable information in three key areas:

1. Federal supports and services available for people experiencing Long COVID – from how to navigate your rights to how to navigate health care coverage, community services, financial assistance, nutrition and educational questions and more.

2. Resources for health care personnel treating patients with Long COVID, as well as support for health care personnel experiencing stress and trauma related to COVID-19.

3. Services for individuals confronting challenges related to mental health,

substance use, and bereavement.

Federal departments will continue to engage with partners, including state and local governments, on the scope and accessibility of these services to meet the needs of individuals.

Engagement of nongovernmental experts, organizations, and stakeholders, including individuals affected directly by the longer-term effects of COVID-19, has played an essential role in shaping the government’s response to COVID-19 and Long COVID, including the development of these reports.

As more is learned about Long COVID, the best protection remains to prevent COVID-19 in the first place by following basic public health interventions, including getting vaccinated, boosted, and wearing a mask indoors in public where the [COVID-19 community level](#) is high, according to HHS officials.

Kreidler orders extended to Aug. 26

State Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler has extended three emergency orders.

His [order requiring health insurers to waive copays and deductibles](#) for any consumer requiring testing for COVID-19 and his order [protecting consumers from receiving surprise bills](#) for lab fees related to medically necessary diagnostic testing for COVID-19 are both extended until Aug. 26.

Kreidler also extended his [order requiring health insurers to cover coronavirus vaccine counseling](#) until Sept. 4.

Kreidler's order waiving cost-sharing applies to all state-regulated health insurance plans and short-term, limited-duration medical plans. The order

on surprise billing applies to both in-state and out-of-state laboratories when a provider orders diagnostic testing for COVID-19.

Also, insurers must continue:

- Allowing a one-time early refill for prescription drugs.
- Suspending any prior authorization requirement for treatment or testing of COVID-19.

If an insurer does not have enough medical providers in its network to provide testing or treatment for COVID-19, it must allow enrollees to be treated by another provider within a reasonable distance at no additional cost.

“Consumers are rightly concerned about prevention, testing and possible

treatment,” Kreidler said. “My emergency orders provide guidance to health insurers and should help reassure the public that we will take all necessary steps to protect them.”

Kreidler is using powers granted to him following the statewide emergency that Gov. Jay Inslee declared to protect Washington state residents against the spread of the coronavirus.

When the governor issues an emergency proclamation, the commissioner can issue an emergency order related to health care coverage to ensure access to care. The order can be extended by the commissioner for 30 days at a time as long as the governor's emergency proclamation remains in effect.

Now available

the NOVAVAX vaccine for COVID-19

Limited supplies at the following
locations in Island County:

Island Drug in Oak Harbor and Clinton

Camano Island Health System

Pediatric Associates offices in
Oak Harbor and Freeland

Saar's Super Saver Foods

WhidbeyHealth Community Pharmacy





WITH THE recent purchase of 66 million doses of Moderna vaccine, the federal government will have 171 million doses total for fall, winter.

171 mil doses of vaccines ordered for fall

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or HHS, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Defense, announced July 29 an agreement to purchase 66 million doses of Moderna's bivalent COVID-19 vaccine booster candidate for potential use in the fall and winter.

The contract announcement followed a recommendation by the FDA in June that vaccine manufacturers update their existing COVID-19 vaccines to create a bivalent booster that can target BA.4 and BA.5 omicron subvariants.

The purchase is in addition to the 105 million bivalent COVID-19 vaccine booster doses the U.S. government purchased recently from Pfizer for potential use later this year, pending FDA authorization and a recommendation by CDC.

Pending those FDA and CDC actions, HHS said it would receive its first deliveries of the Moderna and Pfizer

vaccine booster doses in early fall.

"We must stay vigilant in our fight against COVID-19 and continue to expand Americans' access to the best vaccines and treatments," said HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra.

"As we look to the fall and winter, we're doing just that — ensuring Americans have the tools they need to stay safe and help keep our nation moving forward," he said.

According to HHS, existing COVID-19 vaccines remain the single most important tool in preventing serious illness, hospitalization and death, and, given the current threat that BA.5 omicron subvariant poses, it is essential that Americans stay up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations.

In the absence of additional COVID-19 funding from Congress, in July the administration said it pulled \$10 billion from critical COVID-19 response efforts in order to pay for additional vaccines and treatments. The

funding for this latest agreement with Moderna comes from that reallocated funding.

Combined, the two agreements with Moderna and Pfizer would make available to the U.S. approximately 171 million bivalent vaccine booster doses for the fall and beyond, should they be authorized and recommended, which would not be enough for every single American.

Both Moderna and Pfizer agreements include options for a total of 600 million doses — 300 million from each company — options that can only be exercised with additional funding from Congress.

To award the contract, the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, part of ASPR, collaborated with the DOD Joint Program Executive Office for Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defense and Army Contracting Command, according to HHS.

Novavax COVID-19 Vaccine: What You Should Know



What is the Novavax vaccine?

The newest FDA authorized COVID-19 vaccine, Novavax, is different than the other COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the US. Novavax is a protein subunit vaccine that uses the same, long-used, technology seen in other widely used vaccines such as HPV, hepatitis B, and flu. Novavax is a two-dose series given 21 days apart, available to those aged 18 years and older.

Novavax is a traditional protein subunit vaccine.

While each of the authorized vaccines works to help our body's immune system recognize and attack the COVID-19 virus, Novavax utilizes an older, more familiar vaccine technology.



- Protein subunit COVID-19 vaccines contain pieces (proteins) of the virus that causes COVID-19
- They also contain an additive along with fats and sugars intended to help the immune system respond to the virus and protect you in the future
- They do not contain mRNA

Novavax side effects are proving to be minimal.

Novavax's temporary side effects are not unlike the typical side effects seen with other COVID-19 vaccines. Pain/tenderness, redness and swelling at the injection site, as well as fatigue, muscle pain, headache, joint pain, nausea/vomiting, and fever. Protein subunit COVID-19 vaccines cannot cause COVID-19 or other illnesses.

What does the data show?

Clinical trial studies conducted in the spring of 2021 showed that the Novavax vaccine demonstrated 90% effective against stopping COVID-19 infections and 100% effective in preventing COVID-19 related deaths.

The vaccine is said to have prompted broad immune responses against all COVID-19 variants, including BA.5, according to ongoing trials. Subunit vaccines like Novavax do not use any live virus and cannot change or influence our genes. We have also learned that Novavax:



- Has been used effectively in many other countries, including Canada, since 2021
- Does not contain ingredients used in other vaccines that trigger allergies
- Uses same familiar technology used in popular vaccines such as flu, HPV, hepatitis B, and shingles

Novavax has gone through the FDA Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) process and is a valid option, especially for those seeking an alternative to [mRNA vaccines](#).

Novavax may be an option for a booster dose, or for those under the age of 18 in the near future.

Vaccination is still the best choice.

As COVID-19 persists, more vaccine options have become available. It's important to remember that vaccinated is best. Regardless of vaccine brand, vaccination is your best protection from COVID-19 and its effects. Talk to your provider about which option is best for you.



DOH 825-052 July 2022

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.

NIGHT OUT: 720 rapid tests handed out

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questions, address concerns and provide current information.”

Getting the message out about the importance of testing was an important part of taking part in National Night Out, according to Melissa Hartmann, COVID infection prevention specialist.

“Testing saves lives,” said Hartmann. “Testing allows people to take precautions, like quarantining, in a timely manner to stop the virus from spreading; infected people without symptoms can still spread the virus.”

“Testing also helps public health officials identify and respond to outbreaks, and to track new variants of the virus. Testing is an important component in helping resume normal activities.”

“In addition to that,” she said, “testing will help you make informed decisions about what activities you may want to participate in. For example, whether you should visit a long-term care facility, visit with someone who has a weakened immune system or whether you should attend large or crowded events.”

“If you are often in environments where you are at a higher risk of being exposed to COVID-19, you might want to test more regularly to screen for the disease too,” she said.

“You should take a test five days after any exposure, especially if you have waning or no immunity protections against COVID-19,” Hartmann said. “The earlier you catch the disease, treatment options are more likely to be successful and it will be less likely for you to need hospitalization due to complications.”

Hartmann said she also appreciated the opportunity to build on current community partnerships and develop new ones.

“I think last night was a great event because it helped bring community members out to see different organizations that serve the community,” she said.

“We at the Island County COVID Response Team were able to showcase to the community and different partner



LANGLEY POLICE CHIEF Tavier Wasser talks with Paul Shimada, head of the Island County Covid Response Team vaccine program during National Night Out.

agencies what COVID Response has to offer and provide expertise and guidance about COVID related policy and recommendations,” she said.

“Important things we were able to accomplish at National Night Out included raising awareness about the test kit expiration date being extended, displaying and providing contact information for COVID Response, actively engaging the community in conversation, connecting the general population with the supply chain of home-based test kits, and liaising with the different local organizations.”

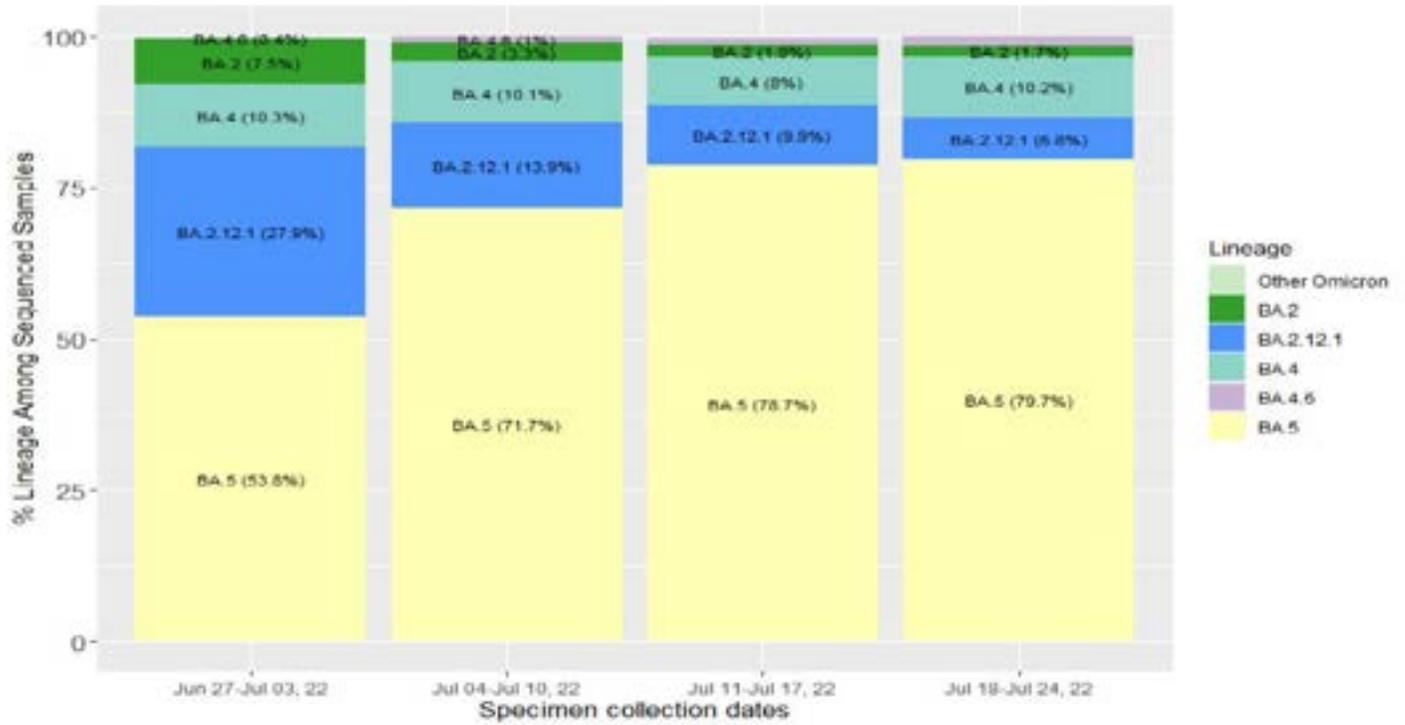
“There were a total of 36 federal, state, county and city first responder and partner agencies, which contributed to the event’s huge success,” said Capt. Tony Slowik, of the Oak Harbor Police Department.

Slowik organizes the annual Night Out.

“The community turnout was outstanding and already received many positive comments,” Slowik said the day after this year’s event.

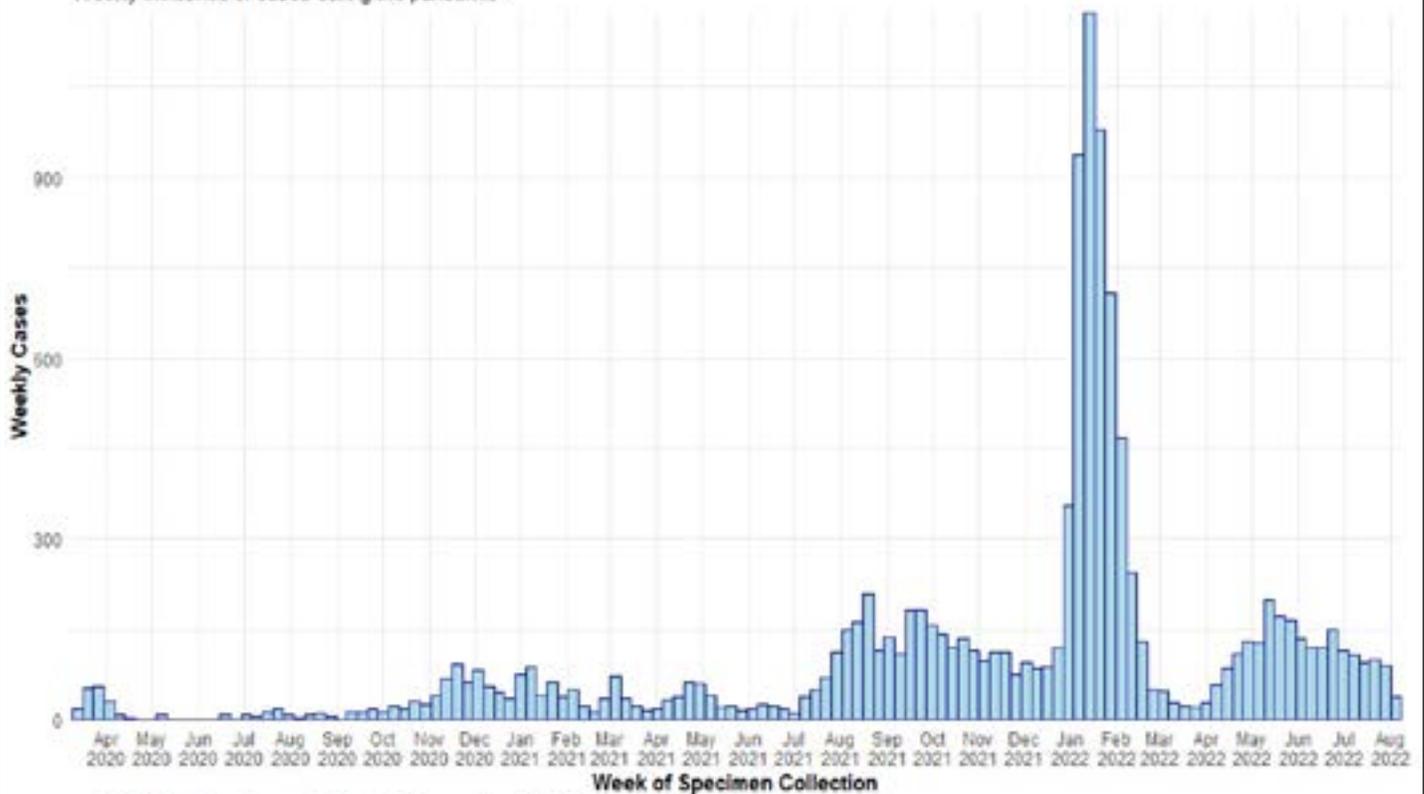
Slowik said that next year’s National Night Out is set for Aug. 1 at Windjammer Park.

SARS-CoV-2 lineages circulating in Washington state



Island County COVID-19 Cases

Weekly incidence of cases during the pandemic



n = 12169 Island County cases. Collection dates range from Mon 09 Mar 2020 to Wed 03 Aug 2022
 1 case(s) missing date of onset and not shown

WADOH Transmission Level	CDC Community Impact Level		
HIGH	LOW		
7-day Case Rate – 110.02	7-day Case Rate	7-day COVID-19 Hospitalization Rate	COVID-19 Occupancy 7-day Average
100+	<200	10-19.9	<10%

Case and hospitalization rates are evaluated in different time frames by different organizations. As a result estimates may differ and be more or less current and complete depending on that evaluation frame.

14-Day Case Rate

Date	N	Population	Rate per 100,000
06/29/2022 – 07/12/2022	190	86,350	220.03
07/06/2022 – 07/19/2022	196	86,350	226.98
07/13/2022 – 07/26/2022	185	86,350	214.24
07/20/2022 – 08/02/2022	185	86,350	214.24

No. of COVID-19 cases in Washington state: **1,744,309** *

No. of COVID-19 Deaths in Washington state: **13,697** *

No. of COVID-19 Deaths in Island County: **91** *

* As of Aug. 4, 2022

Summary Table of Island County Count Positive COVID-19 Cases

Date	Count	Change
07/14/2022	11867	+99
07/21/2022	11972	+105
07/28/2022	12068	+96
08/04/2022	12169	+101

Island County Total Known Positive COVID-19 Cases by Location

Location	Positive Count	Death Count
Camano Island	2860	14
Clinton	585	5
Coupeville	895	15
Freeland	522	7
Greenbank	118	0
Langley	401	2
Oak Harbor	6778	48
Missing Accurate Zip	10	0
Total	12169	91

Vaccinated Island County Residents

Number of Island County residents who have initiated primary series

59,945

Population (6 months+) eligible to be vaccinated

84,974

Data as of 11:59 p.m. August 1, 2022

Source: Washington State Department of Health Data Dashboard

7-Day Hospitalization Rate

Date	N	Population	Rate per 100,000
07/05/2022 – 07/11/2022	8	86,350	9.26
07/11/2022 – 07/17/2022	14	86,350	16.21
07/18/2022 – 07/24/2022	7	86,350	8.11
07/25/2022 – 07/31/2022	9	86,350	10.42

Test Positive for COVID-19?

If you received a positive COVID test result, please carefully review the information below:

Step 1: Take care of yourself

Pay attention to your symptoms. If symptoms worsen, call your healthcare provider for guidance.

Call 911 if you have:

- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- Unusual feelings of confusion or unable to respond
- Trouble breathing
- Lips or face have a blue or purple tint

Step 2: Stay home & away from others. Isolate for at least 5 days

- Stay in a separate room from other household members, if possible.
- Use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Take steps to improve ventilation at home, if possible.
- Avoid contact with other members of the household.
- Don't share personal household items such as cups, towels, and utensils.
- Wear a well-fitting mask when you need to be around other people. Tight-fitting masks such as KN95s and three-ply surgical masks offer the best protection while cloth masks the least protection.
- Everyone in isolation should wear a mask when around others for 10 days from their first symptom, or the date of positive test if they don't have symptoms.

An antigen test is recommended on **DAY 5** to determine if you are still infectious. If you test positive, you should isolate for another five days.

If, after another five days, you exhibit no symptoms, or symptoms are improving, you may be around others but should wear a tight-fitting mask until **DAY 10** when around others.

For more detailed information about when you can leave isolation, please review CDC guidelines.

Step 3: Complete online form

First, notify the **Island County COVID Response Team** of your positive test result by completing the online [positive test reporting form](#), which can also be located by scanning the QR code at right. If you are unable to report your positive result online, call the **Island County COVID Response Call Center at 360-678-2301**. The Call Center can assist you in reporting your result. Next, notify your place of work or school that you tested positive.



Step 4: Notify close contacts of your diagnosis

Notify anyone you live with, traveled with in a vehicle, or who was within six feet of you for 15 minutes or more two days before your symptoms began, or if you have no symptoms, two days before you took your test.

For your close contacts:

- If they are fully vaccinated and boosted, they do not need to quarantine, but they should wear a tight-fitting mask around others for 10 days, monitor themselves for any signs or symptoms of COVID and seek medical attention or testing if they develop symptoms of COVID.
- If they are not fully vaccinated and boosted, they should remain in quarantine for five days, then they should wear a tight-fitting mask around others for an additional five days, monitor themselves for any signs or symptoms of COVID and seek medical attention or testing if they develop symptoms of COVID.
- They should consider obtaining an over-the-counter rapid test (if available) to help minimize potentially exposing others. Free rapid test kits are available for close contacts from Island County COVID Response by calling 360-678-2301.
- For more detailed information go to [Quarantine](#) guidance online.

