



## **INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM**

**TO: Planning and Economic Development Committee**

**FROM: Derek Speck, Economic Development Administrator**

**CC: Mayor Ekberg**

**DATE: May 27, 2020**

**SUBJECT: Business Recovery Update: Reopening Phases**

### **ISSUE**

This item is intended as an overview of Washington State's phases of business reopening.

### **BACKGROUND**

On February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Governor Inslee proclaimed a state of emergency in Washington State due to the COVID-19 outbreak. On March 16, 2020 Governor Inslee announced a statewide closure of all restaurants, bars, entertainment and recreational facilities, and a limit on large gatherings, due to the rapid increase in COVID-19 cases. On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Governor issued the Stay Home Stay Healthy order which required all non-essential business functions to close from March 25<sup>th</sup> through May 4<sup>th</sup>. On May 4<sup>th</sup> he extended that order through May 31<sup>st</sup>.

On April 21<sup>st</sup> the Governor announced the State's recovery plan "Safe Start" and explained that the loosening of restrictions will look more "like the turn of a dial than the flip of a switch." Businesses and activities will be allowed to reopen in four phases. On May 5<sup>th</sup> all counties started in Phase 1. The movement to future phases and reopening of businesses will be dependent on the decrease of COVID-19 infections and deaths which will be dependent on sufficient testing, contact identification, personal protective equipment for those who need it, and adequate capacity in our health care system. As of May 25th, twenty-one of Washington State's counties have moved into Phase 2.

To apply for a variance, counties must have an average of less than 10 new cases per 100,000 residents over a 14-day period. The application process requires support from the local health officer, the local board of health, local hospitals, and the county commission/council.

Each county must demonstrate they have adequate local hospital bed capacity as well as adequate PPE supplies to keep health care workers safe. The application must include plans for:

- Making testing available and accessible to everyone in the county with symptoms.
- Staffing case investigations and contact tracing.
- Housing people in isolation or quarantine who can't or don't want to do so at home.
- Providing case management services to those in isolation and quarantine.
- Responding rapidly to outbreaks in congregate settings.

The variance requests are reviewed by the secretary of health, who can approve the plans as submitted, approve with modifications or deny the application. If circumstances change within the jurisdiction, the variance can be revoked.

When a county moves into Phase 2, businesses that reopen must follow State Guidance on safety procedures for their industry. A list of the Guidance documents is attached.

Statewide, essential businesses continue to be open. Non-essential businesses that may reopen during Phase 1 include: landscaping and lawn care, vehicle sales, pet-walking, car washes, and curb-side retail.

In Tukwila, currently many retail and related businesses are closed or just selling curbside retail. Stores selling essential items such as groceries, pharmaceuticals, and electronics (Costco, Target, Seafood City, Saar's Supersaver, Bartells, Walgreens, Best Buy, Video Only, etc.) are open. Westfield Southcenter mall is closed but some of its stores are selling curbside retail. Restaurants are only open for pick-up and delivery. Admissions and gambling based businesses are closed. Tukwila has some other essential businesses that are open such as in logistics or food production, but many are operating at reduced levels.

### **DISCUSSION**

One of the key questions is when will King County be ready and allowed to move into Phase 2. Among other criteria, in order to get a variance to move into Phase 2 ahead of the whole State, King County would need to average fewer than 10 new cases during a two-week period. During the two-week period of May 3 through 17, King County had 39 cases per 100,000 residents.

According to the King County Health Department website as of May 27, there should be enough testing capacity for anyone in the County who has symptoms and anyone who has been in close contact with someone who has symptoms to get tested. Depending on how successful we are with isolation, contact tracing, and quarantining the risk of spread may continue to decline. Recently, the Institute for Disease Modeling (IDM) showed that a comprehensive program of increased testing, isolation of infected people, and contact tracing with quarantine of home and work contacts could prevent growth in the epidemic as King County gradually re-opens the economy (and relaxes some physical distancing measures) to approximately 75% of pre-pandemic level of public activities. See attached King County Public Health Insider report for more information.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

No budget changes are requested at this time.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Information and discussion only.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

WA State Safe Start presentation

WA State Reopening Guidance for Businesses and Workers

King County Public Health Insider



# Safe Start Washington



## A Phased Approach to Recovery

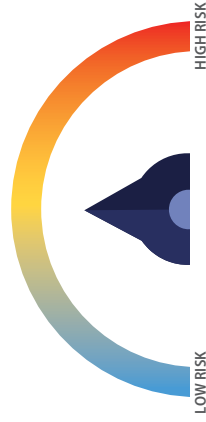
ISSUED BY THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR | MAY 4, 2020



## Safe Start Washington Governor Jay Inslee

Governor Jay Inslee, in collaboration with the Washington State Department of Health, has established a data-driven approach to reopen Washington and modify physical distancing measures while minimizing the health impacts of COVID-19.

This approach reduces the risk of COVID-19 to Washington's most vulnerable populations and preserves capacity in our health care system, while safely opening up businesses and resuming gatherings, travel, shopping, and recreation. The plan involves assessing COVID-19 activity in the state along with health care system readiness, testing capacity and availability, case and contact investigations, and ability to protect high-risk populations.



### COVID-19 Disease Activity

#### COVID-19 DISEASE ACTIVITY

Before reopening Washington and modifying physical distancing measures, COVID-19 disease burden must be low and decreasing as measured by:

- Number and trend of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths in Washington State
- Modeling data, including Institute for Disease Modeling on Puget Sound area rates of COVID-19 spread, University of Washington Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation modeling, and Youyang Gu modeling
- Mobility trends in Washington State, including WSDOT traffic data and Google Mobility Data

#### READINESS AND CAPABILITIES NEEDED

The Department of Health and local public health officials will monitor data to assess our state's readiness for safely reopening and modifying physical distancing measures. In addition to a low and decreasing disease burden, readiness must be achieved in four key areas to proceed from where we are now in the "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order (Phase I) to Phase II, III and IV of the plan. The four key areas include healthcare system readiness, testing capacity and availability, case and contact investigations, and ability to protect high-risk populations. The overall goals for each area, along with the pertinent data that will be considered, are detailed below.





### Health Care System Readiness

#### 1. Health Care System Readiness

Adequate bed capacity, staffing and supplies in the health care system to handle a surge in COVID-19 cases, measured by:

- Number and percentage of licensed beds and ICU beds available in hospitals
- Number of available ventilators
- Days of personal protective equipment (PPE) supply available at hospitals, long-term care facilities, and other health care settings
- Ability of the state to fill high priority PPE requests from local emergency management agencies
- Ability of hospitals and other health care facilities to surge and coordinate movement of patients



### Testing Capacity and Availability

#### 2. Testing Capacity and Availability

Ability for everyone with COVID-19 symptoms and those with high-risk exposures to be tested immediately using a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test and rapidly receive test results as measured by:

- Geographic distribution of testing sites and ability to serve the entire population
- Number and capacity of laboratories in Washington performing COVID-19 testing
- Availability of sufficient swabs, viral transport media, lab reagents, and other materials required for COVID-19 testing
- Number of tests performed per day



### Case and Contact Investigations

#### 3. Case and Contact Investigations

Ability to rapidly isolate those with COVID-19, identify and quarantine their contacts, and provide case management services as measured by:

- Number of investigators trained and working
- Plans for case management
- Availability of isolation and quarantine facilities in local jurisdictions
- Percent of cases investigated within 24 hours of receipt of positive test report
- Percent of contact investigations initiated within 48 hours of receipt of positive test report





#### 4. Ability to Protect High-Risk Populations

Ability to immediately respond to outbreaks in congregate settings, such as long-term care facilities, behavioral health facilities, agricultural worker housing, homeless shelters and correctional facilities, and address the needs of other high-risk populations, including the elderly and the medically frail, measured by:

- Number of outbreaks in long-term care facilities
- Demographic data, including race/ethnicity data, on COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths
- Ability of local or state strike teams with adequate PPE to respond to an outbreak within 24 hours

### ALL INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES

Until there is an effective vaccine, effective treatment or herd immunity, it is crucial to maintain some level of community interventions to suppress the spread of COVID-19 throughout all phases of recovery. This includes heightened protections for the health and safety of workers in essential sectors, people living and working in high-risk facilities (e.g., senior care facilities) and all other workers.

All Washingtonians have a responsibility to protect themselves and others. Each phase, while allowing for additional services to open and return to full capacity, is grounded in the following required basic practices:

#### Guidance for Individuals

All phases – Individuals should continue to:

- Engage in physical distancing, staying at least six feet away from other people
- Wear cloth face coverings in public places when not eating or drinking (cloth face coverings should not be placed on children younger than 2 years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance)
- Stay home if sick
- Avoid others who are sick
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water (use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available)
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Disinfect surfaces and objects regularly



## Requirements for All Employers

All phases – Employers are required to:

- Maintain the six-foot physical distancing requirements for employees and patrons. Adopt other prevention measures such as barriers to block sneezes and coughs when physical distancing is not possible for a particular job task.
- Provide services while limiting close interactions with patrons.
- Provide adequate sanitation and personal hygiene for workers, vendors and patrons. Ensure employees have access to hand washing facilities so they can wash their hands frequently with soap and running water.
- Ensure frequent cleaning and disinfection of the business, particularly of high-touch surfaces.
- Identify personal protective equipment (PPE) and cloth facial coverings in accordance with L&I requirements on facial coverings and industry specific COVID-19 standards. Provide the necessary PPE and supplies to employees.
- Identify strategies for addressing ill employees, which should include requiring COVID-19 positive employees to stay at home while infectious, and potentially restricting employees who were directly exposed to the COVID-19 positive employee. Follow CDC cleaning guidelines to deep clean after reports of an employee with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 illness. This may involve the closure of the business until the location can be properly disinfected.
- Educate employees about COVID-19 in a language they best understand. The education should include the signs, symptoms and risk factors associated with COVID-19 and how to prevent its spread.
- On a case-by-case basis, as directed by federal, state and local public health and workplace safety officials, implement other practices appropriate for specific types of businesses, such as screening of employees for illness and exposures upon work entry, requiring non-cash transactions, etc.
- Follow requirements in [Governor Inslee's Proclamation 20-46 High-Risk Employees – Workers' Rights](#).
- Keep a safe and healthy facility in accordance with state and federal law, and comply with COVID-19 worksite-specific safety practices, as outlined in Governor Inslee's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" Proclamation 20-25, and in accordance with the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries [General Coronavirus Prevention Under Stay Home, Stay Healthy Order](#) and the Washington State Department of Health [Workplace and Employer Resources & Recommendations](#).
- Challenge Seattle and the Washington Roundtable have developed a [business checklist](#) which is a great starting point for businesses as they prepare for a Safe Start. Our shared goal is to establish clear requirements that everyone can understand and apply — employers, workers and customers.

Businesses are also expected to implement any additional requirements developed specifically for their industry, such as those that have been established for construction.



## PHASED APPROACH TO REOPENING WASHINGTON AND MODIFYING PHYSICAL DISTANCING MEASURES

Phase I of reopening Washington begins on May 5, 2020. When COVID-19 disease burden is low and decreasing and the four above capabilities are met, the Governor will issue an order for the state to move into future phases. The state will stay in every phase for a **minimum of three weeks**. During that time, the Department of Health and the Governor will re-evaluate the above indicators and determine if the state should remain in the current phase, advance to the next phase or return to the previous phase. No phase will last less than three weeks before moving to the next phase, in order to allow one complete disease incubation period plus an additional week to compile complete data and confirm trends.

The following table shows the phased approach for reopening businesses and resuming activities not authorized under Proclamation 20-25. **This phased approach may be adjusted as the pandemic evolves.** The industries listed are not an exclusive or exhaustive list of industries. Businesses listed in each phase of the plan will have industry-specific guidance and safety criteria developed to ensure workplace safety and public health are maintained. Those business activities are not authorized to open until the industry-specific guidance and safety criteria are issued.

A number of different factors were considered when deciding which activities could be resumed and which businesses could be reopened in various phases. These factors included:

- Risk of disease spread during the individual or business activity
- Number of people who could potentially be infected during the individual or business activity
- Economic benefits to opening the business
- Individual benefits to opening the business

Additional plans for a phased approach to restarting health care and educational activities are under development.

Families are adjusting to a new way of life, and we understand the impacts this is having on them. The connection between education, childcare, youth sports, summer programs and extracurricular activities is critical and must be viewed from a holistic lens to ensure equity and high quality of life. As we prepare for what the reopening of school looks like, we will be working closely with the Department of Health, Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction, Department of Children, Youth and Families, and parents to release plans in the future.

While childcare is currently an essential business activity and a key component to the reopening plan, we know there is more to do. The state will continue efforts to ensure adequate access and affordability for families.





# WASHINGTON'S PHASED APPROACH

Modifying Physical Distancing Measures as we Reopen the State

**INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES SHOULD FOLLOW ALL REQUIREMENTS LISTED ABOVE DURING ALL PHASES**

	 Phase 1	 Phase 2	 Phase 3	 Phase 4
<b>High-Risk Populations*</b>	Continue to Stay Home, Stay Healthy	Continue to Stay Home, Stay Healthy	Continue to Stay Home, Stay Healthy	Resume public interactions, with physical distancing
<b>Recreation</b>	Some outdoor recreation (hunting, fishing, golf, boating, hiking)	Outdoor recreation involving fewer than 5 people outside your household (camping, beaches, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outdoor group recreational sports activities (5–50 people)</li> <li>- Recreational facilities at &lt;50% capacity (gyms, public pools, etc.)</li> <li>- Professional sports without audience participation (horseshoeing, baseball, etc.)</li> </ul>	Resume all recreational activity
<b>Gatherings (social, spiritual)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- None</li> <li>- Drive-in spiritual service with one household per vehicle</li> </ul>	Gather with no more than 5 people outside your household per week	Allow gatherings with no more than 50 people	Allow gatherings with >50 people
<b>Travel</b>	Essential travel and limited non-essential travel for Phase 1 permissible activities	Essential travel and limited non-essential travel for Phase I & II permissible activities	Resume non-essential travel	Continue non-essential travel
<b>Business/Employers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Essential businesses open</li> <li>- Existing construction that meets agreed upon criteria</li> <li>- Landscaping</li> <li>- Auto/RV/Boat/ORV sales</li> <li>- Retail (curb-side pick-up orders only)</li> <li>- Car washes</li> <li>- Pet walkers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remaining manufacturing</li> <li>- Additional construction phases</li> <li>- In-home/domestic services (nannies, housecleaning, etc.)</li> <li>- Retail (in-store purchases allowed with restrictions)</li> <li>- Real estate</li> <li>- Professional services/office-based businesses (telework remains strongly encouraged)</li> <li>- Hair and nail salons/barbers</li> <li>- Pet grooming</li> <li>- Restaurants &lt;50% capacity table size no larger than 5</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restaurants/taverns &lt;75% capacity/ table size no larger than 10</li> <li>- Bar areas in restaurant/taverns at &lt;25% capacity</li> <li>- Movie theaters at &lt;50% capacity</li> <li>- Customer-facing government services (telework remains strongly encouraged)</li> <li>- Libraries</li> <li>- Museums</li> <li>- All other business activities not yet listed except for nightclubs and events with greater than 50 people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nightclubs</li> <li>- Concert venues</li> <li>- Large sporting events</li> <li>- Resume unrestricted staffing of worksites, but continue to practice physical distancing and good hygiene</li> </ul>

\*High-risk populations are currently defined by CDC as: persons 65 years of age and older; people of all ages with underlying medical conditions (particularly not well controlled); including people with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma; people who have serious heart conditions; people who are immunocompromised; people with severe obesity; people with diabetes; people with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis; and people with liver disease; people who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility.

## COUNTY VARIANCE REQUESTS

The Department of Health recognizes that there are currently some small counties with a population of less than 75,000 that have not identified a resident with COVID-19 for the past three weeks. These counties have the opportunity to apply for a variance to move to Phase II of this plan before the rest of the state. To apply for a variance, the local jurisdiction must follow the below process and submit the following materials to the Department of Health. County variance applications will be approved or denied by the Secretary of Health.

1. **The process must adhere to the following steps:**
  - a. The local public health officer must submit a signed recommendation to the local board of health with one of the following recommendations: not request a variance and stay in Phase I, request a variance to include all of the Phase II modifications above, or request a variance to include a subset of Phase II modifications.
  - b. The local board of health, if they choose to move forward with a variance request, must vote on such a request.
  - c. The local hospital(s) must submit a letter certifying that they have adequate bed capacity to serve their community and adequate PPE supplies to keep their workers safe.
  - d. The county commission/council must request to move to Phase II (or a subset of Phase II) of the plan.
2. **The county commissioner must submit a letter requesting a variance, the letter from the local hospital certifying they have adequate bed capacity to serve their community and adequate PPE supplies to keep their workers safe, and a document that includes the following information to the Department of Health:**
  - a. Plans to make COVID-19 testing available and accessible to everyone in the county with symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
  - b. The number of tests performed by week over the past three weeks.
  - c. The number of people trained and ready to perform case investigations and contact tracing.
  - d. Plans to house people in isolation or quarantine who do not have a home or wish to isolate or quarantine themselves outside of their home.
  - e. Plans to provide case management services to cases and contacts in isolation and quarantine.
  - f. Plans to rapidly respond to outbreaks in congregate settings.



**3. Included with this application are documents demonstrating approvals and endorsements for all of the following:**

- a. The local public health officers' recommendation to the Board of Health.
- b. Documentation of the vote of the Board of Health, including the motion and the vote totals.
- c. Letters from all hospitals used by the county certifying their bed capacity for COVID-19 patients and PPE supplies.
- d. Documentation of the vote of the county commission, including the vote totals.

In the next two weeks, the Department of Health and Governor Inslee will consider additional criteria which could include cases per capita for allowing other counties to apply for a variance. Local jurisdictions will be allowed to partially implement a phase.





# COVID-19

For the latest COVID-19 health guidance, statistics and resources, [visit Coronavirus.wa.gov](https://www.coronavirus.wa.gov).

Washington Governor - Jay Inslee

## COVID-19 Reopening Guidance for Businesses and Workers

For the latest COVID-19 information and resources visit [coronavirus.wa.gov](https://www.coronavirus.wa.gov).

On May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Governor Inslee signed [Proclamation 20-25.3](#) and outlined the “[Safe Start](#)” plan, a phased approach to re-open Washington’s economy. Under the plan, businesses and activities will re-open in phases with adequate social distancing measures & health standards in place. Businesses may also need to meet additional requirements developed specifically for their industry.

### Essential Business Guidance

Many parts of the economy are already allowed to operate safely as essential businesses. For a list of essential businesses click [here](#).

- [Construction Guidance](#) – issued March 25
- [Real Estate and Mortgage Guidance](#) – issued March 27
- [Funeral Guidance](#) – issued March 28
- [Automotive, Energy, Food and Agriculture, Healthcare/Public Health, In-Home Care, Maintenance, Recreation, Real Estate, and Retail Guidance](#) – issued March 31
- [Outdoor Guidance](#) – issued April 27
- [Elective Surgeries Guidance](#) – issued April 29
- [List of approved essential workforce education programs](#) – issued May 7 (Updated May 19)
- [Essential workforce education program standards](#) – issued May 7
- [Commercial driver license guidelines](#) – issued May 7

### Phase 1 Business Activity Guidelines

- [Construction](#) – issued April 24
- [Additional Construction Guidance](#) – issued April 29
- [Vehicle and Vessel Sales Guidance](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#) – issued May 6
- [Spiritual drive-in services](#) – issued May 6
- [Car Washes Requirements](#) – issued May 7
- [Landscape Services and Outdoor Maintenance Industry](#) – issued May 8
- [Pet Walking Industry](#) – issued May 8
- [Curbside Retail](#) – issued May 8
- [Outdoor Recreation](#) – issued May 14
- [Outdoor Recreation Additional Guidance](#) – issued May 26
- [Outdoor Recreation- Golf](#) – issued May 15

### Phase 2 Business Activity Guidelines

- [Additional Guidance on Voluntary Contact Information](#) – issued May 15
- [Dine-in restaurants and taverns](#) – issued May 11
- [In-store retail](#) - issued May 12
- [Additional manufacturing operations](#) - issued May 12

- [Professional Services](#) - issued May 13
  - [Personal Services](#) (including Cosmetologists, Hairstylists, Barbers, Estheticians, Master Estheticians, Manicurists, Nail Salon Workers, Electrologists, Permanent Makeup Artists, Tattoo Artists, Cosmetology Schools and Esthetics Schools) - issued May 13
  - [Outdoor Recreation](#) – issued May 14
  - [Outdoor Recreation Additional Guidance](#) – issued May 26
  - [Outdoor Recreation- Golf](#) – issued May 15
  - [Construction](#) – issued May 15
  - [Professional Photography](#) – issued May 15
  - [Pet Grooming](#) – issued May 18
  - [Fitness](#) – issued May 19
  - [Real Estate](#) – issued May 19
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# PUBLIC HEALTH INSIDER

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OFFICIAL INSIGHTS FROM PUBLIC HEALTH – SEATTLE & KING COUNTY STAFF



## RESULTS FROM NEW MODEL SHOW NECESSITY OF ROBUST CONTACT TRACING AND OTHER MEASURES TO PREVENT RESURGENCE IN EPIDEMIC

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*Public Health Insider*

A comprehensive program of increased testing, isolation of infected people, and contact tracing with quarantine of home and work contacts could prevent growth in the epidemic as King County gradually re-opens, according to a [new modeling report](#) by the Institute for Disease Modeling (IDM).

The report also found that there was little room to increase public interaction without risk of exceeding the effective reproductive rate of 1.0, a critical threshold for preventing growth in new cases locally. This report finding signals the need for caution in reopening to avoid a return to rapidly growing infections and deaths.

“Our community’s initial compliance with the stay at home directive and other COVID-19 precautions such as physical distancing, avoiding non-essential activities and large gatherings and good hand hygiene has greatly reduced the spread of COVID-19 in King County,” said Dr. Jeff Duchin, Health Officer for Public Health – Seattle & King County. “This report suggests that additional efforts will be needed to allow us to gradually increase our activities without risking a dangerous increase in cases, hospitalizations and severe illnesses that could overwhelm our healthcare system.”

### **About the model**

This new report is different than [previous IDM analyses](#) for King County, which work to understand and explain the current and historical trajectory of the COVID-19 epidemic locally. By comparison, the “Covasim” model allows for more complex simulations in order to better understand and estimate the impact of interventions such as home quarantine and contact tracing, and how they would enable the relaxation of some physical distancing measures as part of reopening the economy. The two types of reports complement one another and are drawn from the same [data sources](#) for King County supplied by the Washington State Department of Health.

Covasim is an agent-based model, meaning that it simulates the actions of individuals and their contacts to answer questions about the spread of disease. The Covasim model, which is open source, uses demographic information such as age and population size; realistic transmission networks, including in the home, schools, workplaces and communities; age-specific disease outcomes; and disease-transmission dynamics. This new report generated by the Covasim model simulates a representative sample of 2.25 million King County residents.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has created an urgent need for models that can predict epidemic trends, explore intervention scenarios and estimate resource needs,” said Dr. Daniel Klein, Computational Science Research Lead at IDM. “Agent-based models such as Covasim represent another powerful tool for decisionmakers to understand the impact of different policy choices related to reopening society and the economy.”

While agent-based modeling is able to capture many details of populations and disease transmission, the work has important limitations and assumptions that could impact the findings. They include inherent delays in data; the choice of model input data; a skewing toward younger ages for cases and deaths in the model; and not accounting for COVID-like symptoms due to other respiratory conditions.

### **Details of report findings**

The goal of the Covasim analysis is to quantify the delicate balance between relaxing physical distancing and increasing countermeasures, including contact tracing, to keep the COVID-19 epidemic under control. The aim is to keep the effective reproductive rate under 1.0, to avoid a rapid rise in cases.

The model found that having a comprehensive program consisting of household and workplace quarantine, contact tracing, and increased testing could allow for increasing levels of public activity and reopening of the economy, reflected in the report as transmission potential. Transmission potential is reported as a percentage, with 100% equaling pre-pandemic levels of public activities.

“Agent-based models like Covasim have many inputs to account for the local context and latest science. However, even if we plug in best-guess numbers for King County, there’s a lot we don’t know,” said Klein. “We use computer algorithms to automatically choose values for the least-known model inputs, with reasonable limits, to ensure the model output match the number of tests, diagnoses, and deaths by age.”

One of the unknown model inputs was the amount people are avoiding COVID-19 by staying home from work and taking personal precautions. By calibrating to the data, the IDM researchers found that as of April 25<sup>th</sup>, transmission at workplaces and in the community was down to just 33% of what it would have been if no distancing or precautions were taken. This result is necessarily in the past because COVID infections take a while to show up in data.



The model shows how increased transmission associated with a return to workplaces and public activities can be offset by varying levels of countermeasures. Several possible countermeasures are explored, ranging from simple isolation of diagnosed individuals to a comprehensive program that includes for additional testing, contact tracing, and high levels of compliance with household quarantine.

Compared to the estimated level of 33% transmission potential on April 25<sup>th</sup>, comprehensive measures could counteract an increase in transmission potential up to 75% of pre-COVID levels. While schools remain closed in this scenario, some lesser level of distancing measures would be retained, and will likely be needed until effective treatments and a vaccine are developed. One such measure not included in the IDM report is cloth face coverings, which people in King County have been **directed to use** and could further reduce COVID-19 risk.

Another finding of the report is that based on the level of activity on April 25<sup>th</sup>, the transmission potential in workplaces and in the community could be increased marginally from 33% on April 25<sup>th</sup> to 38% while still avoiding a rapid rise in cases. However, this scenario does not take into account any potential increases in public interaction patterns that may have occurred since that time. As a result, this finding may no longer be accurate, spotlighting the need for caution in reopening.

## **Next steps**

Dr. Duchin detailed community-wide actions needed to reopen the economy and prevent another surge in local cases:

“To move forward while decreasing risk sufficiently, we need to diagnose people with COVID-19 earlier in the course of illness and ensure that infected people are safely and rapidly isolated from others. We also need to ensure that the household members and other close contacts of COVID-19 cases are rapidly identified and quarantined.

“It’s critical to remember that many COVID-19 cases are spread from people without symptoms. All of us must continue to do everything we can to prevent ourselves from becoming infected and from spreading COVID-19 to others unknowingly.

“For example, all businesses, workplaces and other organized activities should be sure to take the required COVID-19 safety measures to reduce the risk of spread and protect their workers and the public.

“We also need to continue to practice physical distancing, minimize close contact with others in the community, and avoid poorly ventilated areas and crowded places where distancing is not possible. Frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer and regularly cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces remain important. Please remember to use cloth face masks in public to protect one another and reduce the spread of COVID-19 as we increase our activities.”

**Report link:**

[https://covid.idmod.org//data/Modeling\\_countermeasures\\_for\\_balanced\\_reopening\\_King\\_County\\_Washington.pdf](https://covid.idmod.org//data/Modeling_countermeasures_for_balanced_reopening_King_County_Washington.pdf)

**For more information about the open source Covasim model and its methodology:**

[https://covid.idmod.org/data/Covasim\\_model\\_report.pdf](https://covid.idmod.org/data/Covasim_model_report.pdf)

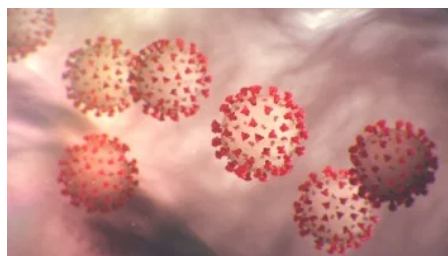
*IDM shapes global efforts to eradicate infectious diseases and to achieve permanent improvements in the health of those most in need. An institute within the Global Good Fund, IDM is a collaboration between Intellectual Ventures and Bill and Melinda Gates. IDM is contributing modeling and analytic services to local and state governments to support COVID-19 response efforts.*

Originally published 5/26/20

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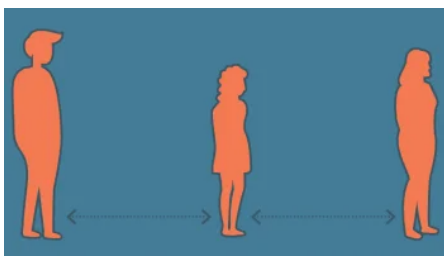
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REPORT: PROMISING RESULTS OF SOCIAL DISTANCING TO SLOW SPREAD OF COVID-19; HEALTH OFFICIALS STRESS IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUED MEASURES

April 15, 2020

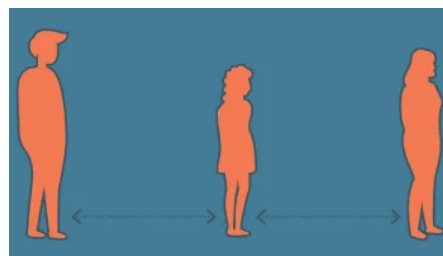
*In "Novel Coronavirus"*



NEW MODELING REPORTS SUGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT OF SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES ON COVID-19 EPIDEMIC, BUT MORE PROGRESS NEEDED

March 30, 2020

*In "Communicable Disease"*



UPDATE: COVID-19 TRANSMISSION DECLINE SLOWING, RAPID RISE AT RISK WITHOUT CONTINUED SOCIAL DISTANCING

April 24, 2020

*In "Novel Coronavirus"*

< MEDIA RELEASE: MORE LOCATIONS FOR COVID-19 TESTING AT NO COST AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT KING COUNTY

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Public Health - Seattle & King County

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Anyone with [#COVID19](#) symptoms, or close contact with someone who has the disease, should be tested.

Testing is increasingly available in King County. Learn more. [kingcounty.gov/covid/testing](https://kingcounty.gov/covid/testing)

## Feeling sick? Get tested for COVID-19.

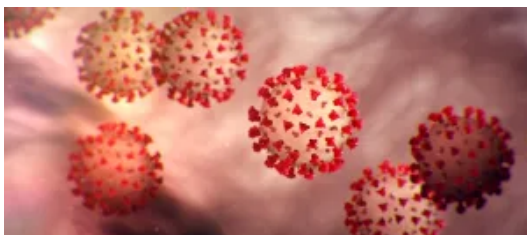
### Get tested for COVID-19 if you:

Have mild or severe symptoms. Common symptoms include: cough, difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell, **OR** have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

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CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)



For more King County resources on COVID-19, please visit: [kingcounty.gov/covid](https://kingcounty.gov/covid)



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