



MEDIA RELEASE

San Juan County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 18, 2020

Case Update

Note: Current positive case numbers are available online at the [County Case Count Page](#). As indicated on that page, these numbers are only updated after case confirmation is complete, usually daily. It is possible that other information sources in community may be quicker to report on new cases, but ensuring privacy and accuracy is critical for this official information source.

Since the [last update](#) on Friday DEC 11th, total cases in San Juan County have increased from 71 to 75. All of the four new cases are on San Juan Island.

ORCAS ISLAND

There are no positive cases being actively monitored on Orcas Island at this time.

LOPEZ ISLAND

There are no positive cases being actively monitored on Lopez Island at this time.

SAN JUAN ISLAND

There is one positive case being actively monitored on San Juan Island at this time. Note that it is possible to determine that a recently diagnosed individual is no longer contagious and in need of monitoring due to recency of symptom onset, testing date, and timing of receiving results.

One of the new cases on San Juan Island is a close contact of a previous case. The remaining three new cases are unrelated to each other and any previous cases. Out-of-state travel is the most likely transmission source for one of these cases. The potential transmission source of the final two cases has not been identified, suggesting the possibility of community spread.

Note that a number of close contacts have been identified for several of these cases, all of whom are household members or, or who worked with the positive individuals.

These close contacts are monitored daily by the San Juan County Health & Community Services team until they have completed their quarantine period.

OVERALL PICTURE:

-The trend of a small but steady stream of new cases in San Juan County continues from previous weeks. While statewide numbers remain at close to an all-time high, there is a hint of a possible stabilization or slight decline in case

volumes. Though difficult to prove definitively, this reduction is likely due to increased restrictions on movement and activities, and a lull between Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday movement and socializing.

-Given the enormous uptick in cases nationally and in Washington, San Juan County continues to be doing relatively well. However, for communities with small populations like ours, even a small increase in numbers would quickly move us up the chart in terms of case rate – leading to a corresponding risk of widespread community transmission. The basic messages of masking, staying local, workplace safety, and limiting close indoor contacts remain as vital as ever.

-There is continued progress with the vaccine effort at all levels. The first doses arrived in Washington this week, and the larger healthcare providers in the islands hope to be rolling out vaccine to high-risk staff in short order. The San Juan County Health & Community Services team has recently received regulatory approval (after a very complex and detailed application process) to receive and distribute vaccine. While it is unclear when supplies will actually arrive, this is a major step forward. As doses are received, Health & Community Services will be able to move ahead with their intended effort to support our local healthcare providers and pharmacies as needed, and provide vaccine to those who are underserved and do not have ready access to primary vaccine sources.

-As many have seen reported in the media, the number of doses allocated to Washington State (and other states) has been reduced as the federal government recently revised their delivery forecast. While frustrating, this is a good reminder of the fact that this is an unprecedented effort and there will be challenges and obstacles throughout. We all need to take any report of numbers or timelines as nothing more than an estimate and not become too attached to the specifics, but instead look for overall trends. As with most things these days, flexibility, patience, and tolerance are going to be the foundation of a thoughtful and equitable effort.

-A number of organizations, agencies, businesses, and individuals have been reaching out to the Health & Community Services team about getting on a vaccine list or being assured that they will be eligible at a certain point in the distribution effort. While an eagerness to receive the vaccine is an encouraging sign, please know that there is no list of individuals and that the details of future phasing have yet to be released by state and federal agencies. As details become clear, information will be shared directly with those impacted, and broadly to the community at large.

-Thanks islands. Happy holidays, and here's to things looking up as we head into 2021.