

May 13, 2021

Dear healthcare partners,

Thank you for your hard work and commitment to meeting the health needs of Kitsap County during these difficult times. As a medical community, you have faced the ever-changing challenges of this pandemic with resilience, positive energy, and courage.

Congratulations on receiving your own COVID-19 immunizations, which those of us in healthcare have elected to do in overwhelming numbers. Now we need to finish the critical work of vaccinating the rest of our community. More transmissible COVID-19 variants, which cause more severe disease, are the primary circulating strains of virus and are currently driving a [surge in hospitalizations](#) of younger people in our community and around the region. Cases are rising in school age children and young adults, with outbreaks currently active in multiple Kitsap schools and childcare centers.

Half of Kitsap residents over age 16 have started vaccinations. The FDA's decision to authorize COVID vaccination for children ages 12 to 15 now opens the door to getting more families protected. We need to finish the job and need your help to get this done by shifting the strategy from mass vaccination sites to pop-up and clinic-based vaccinations.

We request healthcare providers in all settings:

- Assess the COVID-19 vaccination status of all patients at every encounter.
- Discuss COVID-19 vaccination with patients and offer acknowledgement of concerns, advice, and support.
- Offer and provide vaccination immediately at the point of care and time of service for those who need it.

Vaccines are available and abundant. Let's give them. If we can administer vaccinations in schools, offices, brewpubs, ferry lines, transit centers and farmers' markets, we can certainly give them in doctors' offices, clinics, emergency departments, and hospitals.

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Several concerns that we have heard from the medical community about engaging in COVID-19 vaccine efforts have been addressed. These vaccines are [safe and effective](#). They are widely available to all people ages 12 and older. Virtually all [certified healthcare providers](#) are approved to administer them. Vaccinating [providers are protected from liability](#), including when very rare adverse events occur.

While it is important to avoid wasting vaccine doses, the Washington State Department of Health now recommends COVID-19 vaccine providers open vials as needed to vaccinate as many people as possible. Vaccine management has been [simplified](#). Second doses can be obtained at [numerous sites](#) if vaccinating providers are unable to complete the series. The [administration fee](#) to give these shots is \$40 and does not preclude you from receiving FEMA reimbursement for your mass vaccination efforts in other venues. Please contact me if you need any assistance or have any questions or concerns.

Preliminary survey data collected by Kitsap Public Health District reveal that for people who are not yet vaccinated, the top choice of where they want to receive vaccination is at their doctor's office. We suspect that many who are hesitant to receive vaccination would do so if encouraged and cared for by their healthcare provider. You are the most trusted source of information for your patients. Please give them the best advice you can to protect their health and end this pandemic, and then vaccinate them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gib Morrow', written over a faint, illegible background.

Gib Morrow, MD, MPH

Health Officer,

Kitsap Public Health District