

July 2, 2021

Increase In Risky Behavior and WA State Reopening

Actions Requested

- Be aware of potential for increase in risky behavior as summer begins and Washington State reopens.
- Promote the SAFE Model:
 - S: Sex and intimacy – continue healthy and safe sexual behaviors
 - A: Alternative choices – when drinking, decide on a designated driver ahead of time
 - F: Firearm storage and use – lock up and safely store firearms, fireworks or other weapons
 - E: Events and celebrations – consider options when planning to attend a large-scale gathering
- Share information and strategies with patients for mitigating potential negative impacts of risky behaviors and behavioral health concerns. Include referral to patient helplines.
- Be aware of national trends of increased suspected suicide attempt ED visits amongst adolescents, especially girls.
- Be aware of national trends of increased adverse mental health symptoms amongst parents and caregivers of adults.
- Continue to educate patients about the risks of COVID-19 transmission and benefits of vaccination for those not yet vaccinated.
- For questions, please contact KPHD staff at 360-728-2235.

Background

The summer months of 2021, the state's full reopening, and the Fourth of July holiday are prime opportunities for people to enjoy themselves, socialize, and reconnect with friends and family. The perception of the pandemic ending – which has been negatively impacting life for so many for so long – brings a strong sense of relief for many and a desire to have fun, feel less restricted, and express strong emotions. There are several behavioral health-related risk factors associated with this timing and combination. **It is more important than ever to slow down and make thoughtful plans and decisions to minimize impulsive and potentially dangerous choices and behaviors during this time.**

Kitsap County had more suicide deaths in 2020 compared to the prior 4 years with June 2020 being the month with the highest number of deaths.

As of July 1, 2021, the Kitsap resident COVID past 14-day case rate is 61.4 per 100,000 and the vaccination initiation rate is 63.1% amongst residents ages 12+.

Resources

- Washington State Department of Health Summer 2021 Behavioral Health Provider Alert (attachment)
- MMWR on adolescent suicide ED visits: https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7024e1.htm?s_cid=mm7024e1_w
- MMWR on mental health in parents of children <18: https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7024a3.htm?s_cid=mm7024a3_w
- CDC evidence-based suicide prevention strategies: <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/prevention/index.html>
- Washington State Covid Student Survey Reports: <https://csswashington.org/>
- Kitsap Public Health District COVID information: <https://kitsappublichealth.org/communityHealth/Covid-19/CoronaVirus.php>