

COVID-19

MYTHS VS. MEDICAL FACTS: Safely Returning to Work

Auburn Area Chamber of Commerce

May 14, 2020

MultiCare 
Centers of
Occupational Medicine

COVID-19 in Washington State

As of (5/12/20):

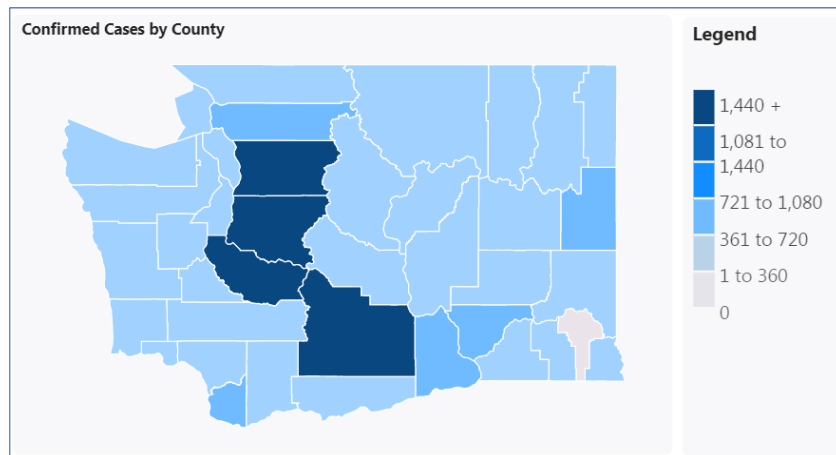
Positive cases: 17,512

Deaths: 975

Fatality rate: 5.6%

Total Tests 261,080

Percent positive: 6.7%



MultiCare Occupational Medicine Update

Remained open to provide services essential to employment

- Some services temporarily suspended; all but one resumed thanks to sufficient PPE and robust check-in screening.
- Regular updates sent to employers. →



Workers comp / job injury care

- Virtual initial & follow-up visits: 1,338 since April 1.

Now focused on Return to Work

- COVID-19 Screening & Testing on demand for employers.
- Useful so long as employers and employees understand the limitations



COVID-19 SCREENING & TESTING AT MULTICARE OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE

Now available to employers

1. Symptom & temperature screen reviewed by a medical provider.
2. Antibody serology (blood) test.
3. PCR (viral) nasal swab test.

May be useful if employer and employee understand the limitations.

No screening or test tools guarantee an employee will not spread COVID-19 at work.

1-page white paper available from MultiCare OccMed



RETURN TO WORK SCREENING

MYTH:

Anyone can come back to work.

FACT:

People who are not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, have not been exposed to a COVID-19 positive person within past 14 days and are not immune suppressed can be screened to return to work.



TEMPERATURE SCREENING GUIDANCE

- Consider a symptom check too
- Take temperature before individual enters facility.
- Sanitize devices between each screening.
- Consider sending an employee home if temperature screen is 100.4 degrees or higher.
- All employees should continue to self-monitor symptoms throughout shift.

COVID-19 TESTING

MYTH:

Testing is not available for most people.

FACT:

Tests are available across the state.



COVID-19 TESTING AT MULTICARE

Two types of testing: Antibody and Viral

Who gets tested?

- Individuals with symptoms
- Resources available for individuals or groups without symptoms (e.g. Employer accounts)

Obtaining a test

- *Private patients:* By appointment at Indigo Urgent Care, Curbside check-in, social distancing and mask requirements
- *Employer accounts:* Contact Occupational Medicine to enroll

ANTIBODY TESTING

MYTH:

Antibody testing will determine if an individual can go back to work.

FACT:

Antibody testing has several limitations.

Positive results for COVID-19 antibodies can verify exposure, but it does not mean the person is immune to the illness.



ANTIBODY TESTING AT MULTICARE

Antibody testing is available

- Cost = about \$60 per test
- *Private patients:* At Indigo Urgent Care. Likely covered by insurance, based on recent communication from federal government
- *Employer accounts:* At Occupational Medicine.
- Up to 5% false negative rate

VIRAL TESTING

MYTH:

Viral testing is well understood and reliable in people without symptoms.

FACT:

Viral testing only provides infection at current time and risks should be considered.



VIRAL TESTING AT MULTICARE

Viral testing is available

- Indicates “active” infection
- Cost = about \$90 per test
- *Private patients:* At Indigo Urgent Care. Likely covered by insurance, based on recent communication from federal government
- *Employer accounts:* At Occupational Medicine.

SAFELY GATHERING AS A TEAM

MYTH:

In person team meetings are not allowed.

FACT:

Meetings can happen on site within reason.



IN-PERSON MEETING GUIDANCE

When necessary:

- Meet in a large room
- Sit or stand at least 6 feet from one another
- Meet for as short as you can
- Close lunch rooms and limit access to areas where people gather
- Limit visitors

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

MYTH:

All facilities need to be disinfected before employees arrive.

FACT:

If your workplace has been unoccupied for 7 days or more, it will only need your normal routine cleaning to reopen the area. This is because COVID-19 has not been shown to survive on surfaces longer than this time.



ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDANCE

Indoors:

- Surfaces and objects that are frequently touched should be cleaned thoroughly and regularly
- Not necessary to clean ventilation systems

Outdoors:

- Disinfecting sidewalks or outdoor areas has not proven to reduce risk of COVID-19
- Increase employee hygiene practices

WORKPLACE PPE

MYTH:

Employees must wear masks or face coverings at all times.

FACT:

Employees should wear masks when working within 6 feet of others and while working in shared spaces (i.e. cubicle, vehicles, desk, phones, printers).



WORKPLACE PPE GUIDANCE

- Establish area for donning and doffing PPE.
- Surgical masks are not respirators and do not provide the same level of protection to workers as properly-fitted respirators.
- After removing PPE, always wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, if available.
- Standard operating procedures for cleaning (including laundering) PPE and items such as uniforms.

Q & A

Please use chat function to submit questions

RESOURCES AND PLANNING

- Know the facts about COVID-19
 - World Health Organization (who.int)
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cdc.gov)
 - Washington Dept of Health (doh.wa.gov)
 - MultiCare Health System (MultiCare.org/coronavirus)
 - MultiCare Occupational Medicine (multicareoccmmed.org)

Thank you

Questions, more information, and the latest updates

- email: occmed@multicare.org
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