APPLICATION FOR COUNTY COVID-19 VARIANCE

Date: 13 May 2020

County: Whitman

Local Health Jurisdiction: Whitman County

Submitter’s Name, Organization, E-mail Address, Phone Number:

Troy D Henderson
Whitman County Public Health Department
Troy.Henderson@whitmancounty.net
(509) 397-6280

The brackets below should be checked to confirm the applicant has included the materials in their variance application or agrees to the statement.

[X] Included with this application are documents demonstrating approvals and endorsements for all of the following:

1. The local public health officer’s recommendation to the Board of Health.

2. Documentation of the vote of the Board of Health, including the motion and the vote totals.

3. Letters from all hospitals used by the county certifying their bed capacity for COVID-19 patients and PPE supplies.

4. Documentation of the vote of the county commission, including the vote totals.

[X] Attached to this application is a document describing all of the following:

1. Plans and identified resources to make COVID-19 testing available and accessible to everyone in the county with symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

2. The number of COVID-19 tests performed in the county by week over the past three weeks.
To: Whitman County Board of Health  
From: Dr. Brad Bowman, Whitman County Health Officer  

Subj: Recommendation for Phase 2 waiver to Governor Inslee’s Stay Home, Stay Healthy Order  

My recommendation to the Whitman County Board of health is to request a variance from the Washington State Secretary of Health, John Wiesman, to allow Whitman County to move into all of the Phase 2 modifications.

Sincerely,

Brad Bowman M.D.  
Health Officer  
Whitman County Public Health Department
WHITMAN COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH ORDER

IN THE MATTER OF:

Authorizing:

Acceptance of the recommendation of Whitman County’s local Public Health Officer to request a variance to go from Phase 1 to Phase 2 of the Governor’s “Phased Approach to Reopening Washington Plan”.

Said request(s) meets with the approval of this Board.

Dated this 13th day of May, 2020.

ATTEST:

Connie Ellis
Maribeth Becker, CMC
Clerk of the Board
BY: Connie Ellis
Deputy Clerk of the Board

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF WHITMAN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Michael Sargent
Chairman

Arthur D. Swanrud
Commissioner

Dean Hughes
Commissioner

Motion: Mr. Chairman, I move to accept the recommendation of Whitman County’s local Public Health Officer in regard to requesting a variance to go from Phase 1 to Phase 2 of the Governor’s “Phased Approach to Reopening Washington Plan”.

No. of Votes For: 3
No. of Votes Against: ____
May 12, 2020

Whitman County Board of Health
310 N Main Street
Colfax, WA 99111

Whitman County Board of Health:

Whitman County Public Hospital District #1A operates Pullman Regional Hospital (PRH). PRH is currently authorized by the Washington State Department of Health to operate at an inpatient surge capacity of 25 beds. This licensed capacity exceeds current average daily census by approximately 14 patients. PRH is prepared to meet surge demands in our Emergency Department and in our ambulatory clinics as well as our Critical Care and Acute Care settings. PRH is prepared to staff, equip and supply surge volumes.

PRH has cross trained physicians, nurses, and ancillary personnel to support additional inpatient volumes in the event of a prolonged surge. We have designated our 6 bed ICU wing to be designated as our COVID isolation unit if a surge of patients were to be admitted. We have modified the physical plant to limit exposure to infection for both staff and patients. These modifications include physical barriers, alternative entrances, exits, patient routes and support space. We have instituted procedures for screening patients, staff, and limited visitors in the hospital and in the community clinics. Our long-term ventilator capacity is 2 to 4 patients that we may be able to manage. We continue to work collaboratively with REDi (Regional Emergency & Disaster Healthcare Coalition) for Eastern Washington on processes for any potential surge in COVID-19 patients or others that may require assistance from other regional hospitals.

PRH is adhering to the Washington State Department of Health’s PPE conservation guidelines including use and re-use of designated PPE. PRH has an on-hand inventory of critical personal protective equipment that exceeds anticipated demand at surge capacity for a period well beyond the minimum 7-day requirement. PRH remains on allocation from routine vendors but we have developed new sources for masks, gowns, gloves, and cleaning supplies to augment our traditional supply chain.

In addition to PPE, PRH has increased on hand inventory of critical medical supplies, medical consumables, laboratory supplies (including test kits) and pharmaceuticals. We have also made recent upgrades to our in-house testing capabilities that allow one-hour turn around results for emergency patients, inpatients, healthcare providers, and long-term care patients.

PRH has adequate bed capacity to serve our communities and adequate personal protective equipment to keep our workers safe.

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott K. Adams
Chief Executive Officer
Pullman Regional Hospital

Gerald L. Early, M.D., M.A., F.A.C.S., F.C.C.P.
Chief Medical Officer/Chief Medical Innovation Officer
Pullman Regional Hospital

835 SE Bishop Boulevard, Pullman, WA 99163  509.332.2541, fax 509.332.6767
May 12, 2020

Whitman County Board of Health:

RE: Whitman County Public Hospital District No. 3
dba Whitman Hospital and Medical Clinics (WHMC)

WHMC has adequate bed capacity, personal protective equipment (PPE), medications, testing supplies and all other necessary equipment and supplies to keep our patients and medical personnel safe.

WHMC is authorized by the Washington State Department of Health to operate at an inpatient capacity of 25 beds. This licensed capacity exceeds our current average daily census by approximately 17 patients. Additionally, WHMC has developed a comprehensive surge plan to address a potential patient surge beyond 25 patients. Specifically, WHMC is prepared to temporarily provide care to 18 additional patients in our Emergency Department and Ambulatory Surgery Unit. WHMC is prepared to meet all staffing, equipment and supply demands associated with such a surge.

WHMC has implemented numerous changes to help limit exposure for potentially Covid-19 positive patients and undiagnosed persons. WHMC has restricted access to the facility to only three doors; has severely restricted patient visitation; has implemented strict PPE requirements for medical personnel and visitors; has implemented telemedicine in its clinics; and has cross-trained personnel to work in various departments in the event of a prolonged surge. WHMC has the ability to ventilate 6 patients if necessary.

WHMC is and will continue to adhere to the Washington State Department of Health’s WA Health system reporting requirements and PPE guidelines, and have plenty of inventory on hand that is well above the potential surge demand.

Sincerely,

Hank Hanigan
Chief Executive Officer

Christin Reisenauer, MD
Chief of Medical Staff
WHITMAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' BOARD ORDER

IN THE MATTER OF:

Authorizing:

Acceptance of the recommendation from the Whitman County Board of Health and authorize Whitman County Public Health Director, Troy Henderson, to submit application for County COVID-19 variance requesting authorization to allow Whitman County to go from Phase 1 to Phase 2 of the Governor's "Phased Approach to Reopening Washington Plan".

Said request(s) meets with the approval of this Board.

Dated this 13th day of May, 2020.

ATTEST:

Connie Ellis
Maribeth Becker, CMC
Clerk of the Board
BY: Connie Ellis
Deputy Clerk of the Board

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF WHITMAN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Michael LeGrand
Chairman

Anthony D. Swannack
Commissioner

Dean King
Commissioner

No. of Votes For: 3
No. of Votes Against:

Motion: Move to accept the recommendation of the Whitman County Board of Health to submit a phase variance application request to go from Phase 1 to Phase 2 of the Governor's "Phased Approach to Reopening Washington Plan" and authorize Whitman County Public Health Director, Troy Henderson, to submit the application to the Washington State Department of Health.
Whitman County COVID-19 testing capabilities

Scope

Whitman County currently has testing capabilities throughout the county. Our two main hospitals, various clinics, and long term care facilities have adequate testing kits and trained staff. We have a drive-up clinic at our main hospital in Pullman that has been administering the majority of our tests. Currently anyone experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 can present themselves at a testing site to get tested or request WCPH travel to them to administer the test. The majority of the testing is currently being handled by Incyte Diagnostics in Spokane which has allowed for faster turn-around times. Whitman County Public Health (WCPH) has two trained staff that can mobilize and administer tests in the field when transportation is an issue.

WCPHD is working with the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Lab (WADDL) at Washington State University to bring high volume (up to 2000 samples a day)/fast turnaround (less than 24 hours) to Whitman County to support the broader region. Anticipated start date is June 1, 2020.
This is what I have from database entry – including data from all hospitals

4/21 – 4/28  73 tests
4/29 – 5/5   85 tests
5/6 – 5/12   76 tests

Chelsea Cannard, RS
Environmental Health Specialist
Whitman County Public Health
Whitman County Public Health (WCPH) COVID-19 Case Management and Contact Tracing Plan

Purpose

WCPH will coordinate the process of contact tracing and case investigation for all individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 that reside in Whitman County. Whitman County plans to perform case investigations and contact tracing using the statewide standardized COVID-19 case and contact investigation protocols. Confirmed cases and known contacts outside of the county will be referred to their affiliated local health jurisdiction.

Teams

WCPH will start with one main epidemiological team with access to two additional teams for contact tracing and case investigation if the need arises. Based on the formula of 30 case investigators per 100,000 pop., Whitman County would need 15 case investigators. The make-up of our teams are as follows:

- WCPH will have a main epidemiological team of 4 staff with the ability to scale up to 8.
- Washington State University’s Environmental Health and Safety will have a team of 5 that may be accessed to handle students and employees of the college.
- WCPH will have a team of 4-7 volunteers with Master’s in Public Health that may be accessed on to handle surge.

Approach

WCPH will receive the initial lab confirmation and contact the primary care provider to ensure that the patient has been notified of the result. If the patient is a WSU student or employee, the case will be forwarded to the WSU Environmental Health and Safety team for investigation. All other cases will be handled by WCPH main epidemiological team or volunteer back-up team. Contacts or cases residing in another jurisdiction will be promptly passed along to their case investigation teams.

WCPH will be initiating contact tracing as soon as possible. Cases involving vulnerable populations will be prioritized. All case reporting forms will be collected by WCPH and entered into WDRS after the investigation has been completed. Depending on the case load, weekly or daily epidemiological meetings will be held to discuss local clusters and efforts to control the infection rate.
May 8, 2020

Dear Whitman County Health Department,

As requested, Washington State University Environmental Health and Safety (WSU EHS) certifies it has resources available to assist the Whitman County Health Department (WCHD) with COVID19 contact tracing and case management.

WSU EHS thanks WCHD for providing COVID19 contact tracing and case management training.

As described in the Interagency Agreement between Whitman County and Washington State University, WSU EHS is working together with WCHD to more effectively protect and improve health and safety in Whitman County and at Washington State University.

Sincerely,

Dwight Haghara
Executive Director
Environmental Health and Safety
Washington State University

cc. Bill Gardner, – WSU COVID19 Incident Co-Commander
Bonnie De Vries – WSU COVID19 Incident Co-Commander
Whitman County Public Health
310 N Main St.
Colfax, WA  99111

May 7, 2020

Dear Mr. Skidmore,

I would like to affirm my commitment to supporting the COVID-19 disease and mitigation and containment efforts in Whitman County that we know will be vitally important now, and in the future. I have a Master’s in Public Health and can contribute the following:

- Faculty expertise and consultation in infectious disease epidemiology, surveillance, and outbreak response.
- Training and technical assistance regarding case investigation and contact tracing for COVID-19

This foundational knowledge and applied skills represent a significant strength to leverage in community health and outbreak response efforts.

Sincere Regards,

Katelin Jackson
Whitman County Public Health Department (WCPHD) COVID-19 Isolation and Quarantine Community Plan

Purpose

WCPHD will coordinate the process of safe and supported required isolation or quarantine for any individual who is unable to observe requirements at their residence or through their own means.

Definitions

Isolation: the separation of persons who are ill, or presumed positive for COVID-19, from those who are healthy. Isolation restricts the movement of persons who are ill to help stop the spread of certain diseases. While in isolation people are monitored medically to support recovery.

Quarantine: the separation and restriction of movement of persons who are well, but who may have been exposed to a communicable disease. These people may have been exposed to a disease and not know it, or they may have the disease but not show symptoms. While in quarantine, people are assessed for signs and symptoms of infection.

Referral Requirements

Referral for Isolation: Individuals who are tested for COVID-19 will be asked to isolate until results are available. Education will be provided with DOH guidance documents.

Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 will be asked to isolate for:

- At least three days (72 hours) since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); AND
- At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Referral for Quarantine: Individuals who have had close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case will be asked to get tested or quarantine for 14 days. Close contact is defined as:

- Living in the same household as a sick person with COVID-19,
- Caring for a sick person with COVID-19,
- Being within 6 feet of a sick person with COVID-19 for approximately 10 minutes, OR
- Being in direct contact with secretions from a sick person with COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed on, kissing, sharing utensils, etc.)
Facilities

**Community Facilities:** Isolation or Quarantine (IQ) facilities will be spread throughout the county in various locations. Local healthcare, higher education, employers, long term care facilities, and faith-based organizations have all been approached to provide IQ resources to safely house staff, patients, students, and when specified, other community members.

**Designated Facilities:** The use of a designated IQ facility will be based on community need. If IQ need surpasses capacity of community facilities, WCPHD will be requesting the deployment of a Washington State Emergency Operations Center “Push Pack” to establish a suitable site within Whitman County.

Levels of Need

WCPHD has established five Levels of Need that will determine how a patient’s IQ needs will be met and range from self-identification of resources to placement by WCPHD or a contracted agency partner. Level will be determined through interview by one of our epidemiological teams.

**Level One:** Individuals isolate or quarantine at home if no high-risk individuals reside in the same household. Individuals will be given IQ guidance at the time of interview with one of our epidemiological teams.

**Level Two:** Individuals unable to isolate or quarantine at home will do so through self-identified resources from friends or family, such as in guest apartments, camper/RVs, or vacation cabins. Individuals will be given IQ guidance at the time of interview with one of our epidemiological teams.

**Level Three:** Individuals unable to isolate or quarantine at home or with friends/family will isolate or quarantine in settings provided by employers with resources or community groups, such as faith-based organizations (FBO). Individuals will be given a list of organizations providing IQ by WCPHD.

**Level Four:** Individuals unable to isolate or quarantine under Levels 1, 2, or 3 will be referred to WCPHD or our local Community Action Center. If the individual is currently experiencing homelessness, the patient will be referred to the Community Action Center. Several blocks of motel rooms throughout our county have been reserved for this purpose.

**Level Five:** At such a time that demand for IQ facilities surpasses capacity; individuals will be placed in a designated IQ facility using resources deployed by the Washington State Emergency Operations Center. A “push pack” will be deployed at a suitable location within Whitman County to meet that need.
**Enforcement**

WCPHD will be working closely with local law enforcement, county legal team, and judiciary to develop plans for controlling risk of non-compliance with Isolation or Quarantine orders.

**Financial Arrangements**

IQ Levels One, Two, and Three will not require funding.

Costs incurred through Levels Four and Five will be paid through Whitman County Emergency Operations Center using funding and resources available from federal and state COVID-19 appropriations.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

PPE will be used as indicated by WA State Department of Health guidance and/or in accordance with the CDC standards. The Whitman County Emergency Operations Center coordinates the ordering and delivery of PPE for organizations in the Washington State Emergency Operations Center system if they are unable to secure PPE needed for their IQ plan.

**Level Five-Designated Facility**

**Referral Process:** The designated Level 5 facility will establish a contact person who will be responsible for accepting referral phone calls and reporting on bed availability. Referrals can only be made by health care professionals, including the Whitman County Health Officer. The contact person will ask for the following screening questions.

1) What type of bed is being sought: isolation or quarantine?
   - If appropriate bed is not available, do not continue.

2) Does the person in need of isolation or quarantine need any of the following:
   - Assistance with ambulation (i.e., getting out of bed, walking, etc.)
   - Assistance with medication administration
   - Assistance with Activities of Daily Living, such as bathing or toileting
   - Monitoring or redirection for dangerous behaviors to self or others

3) If any of the needs within 2a-2d are identified, do not continue.

4) If an appropriate bed is available to meet the person’s needs, then the referring party will contact local transit if transportation is needed.

**Exclusionary Criteria:** The facility will not be staffed for persons with medical needs. Due to limited staffing, persons with the following needs are excluded from admission:

- Assistance with ambulation (i.e., getting out of bed, walking, etc.)
- Assistance with medication administration
- Assistance with Activities of Daily Living, such as bathing or toileting
- Have medical needs that require on-site nursing or medical oversite (such as needing respiratory treatments)
- Monitoring or redirection for dangerous behaviors to self or others

**Staffing**

- **General Information:** At least one staff member will be on site per 25 facility residents. Staffing 24 hours per day, seven days a week, with no more than eight hour shifts and breaks as necessary. One Site Manager will oversee the facility. PPE will be provided with training as needed.

- **Medical Site Supervisor:** A medical care provider will be designated to oversee all medical issues. This individual will be selected through available local medical professionals.

- **Site Manager:** The Site Manager will oversee the day to day operations of the facility and be responsible for health and welfare of residents and all support staff. Site Manager or designee will provide daily resident updates, ensure proper documentation of daily COVID-19 symptom screenings of all residents and support staff, and supervise support personnel.

- **Site Support Personnel:** Staff will be provided to the facility to handle check in/out, assignment of living space, assist in delivery of food and respond to general residence requests. Support personnel will also serve as back-up Site Manager if not available.

- **Site Security:** 24 hours per day, seven days per week security will be provided by the Whitman County Sheriff’s Department.

- **Maintenance Personnel:** Maintenance personnel will be provided through Whitman County if the site is located on county property. If not, services will be contracted through the appropriate entities.

- **Technology Personnel:** Whitman County will provide Information Technology staff to manage WIFI and other technology needs as determined by Site Manager.

**Screening:** Pre-screening is required by the referring medical provider for individuals/families who cannot safely or practically isolate or quarantine in their own home.

**Transportation to Facility:** Those who are able to transport themselves to the location will be provided with directions by Whitman County Public Health and parking will be provided. Individuals who are not able to provide their own transportation will be transported by local transit.

**Check In/Out Procedure:** The facility will have an identified location to check in and check out of the site. Living space will be assigned at check in based on medical assessment and facility status. Residents will be oriented to facility expectations regarding social distancing, rules and cleaning.

**Food:** Provision of meals will be contracted to our Community Action Center and local food banks.
**Laundry:** Laundry services will be contracted with minimum requirements to include cleaning of personal clothing and laundering of sleeping material.

**Decontamination of Facility:** Final decontamination of the facility after use will be contracted to a local professional cleaning service with medical grade decontamination capabilities.

**Visitors:** No visitors will be allowed at the facility.

**Pets:** Pets are not allowed outside qualified service animals. Short term care for pets may be provided by the Whitman County Humane Society or another local service.
May 11, 2020

To Whitman County Board of Health
310 N Main Street
Colfax WA 99111

RE: Case management resources for COVID-19 Variance Plan

Whitman County Board of Health,

Should the Whitman County COVID-19 Variance be approved, Community Action Center (CAC) and members of the Whitman County Health Network stand by to provide necessary case management for individuals placed in quarantine or isolation due to COVID-19 infection or contact.

As a county-wide provider of social services from Community Action Center, we are prepared to use the state and federal funding resources as a part of our housing services contracts to address general social service needs for households affected by COVID-19. This may include, but not be limited to, household resource assessment, goal setting for return to household, optional housing as needed, and referrals to service providers for related care and assessment.

As a member of the Whitman County Health Network, CAC coordinates with the social, medical, and behavioral health resources of the Network’s members, referring households and individuals to other providers as needed to offer a high level of care and resources. The Network’s members are committed to provide resources to respond to a community-wide need, should it occur, to promote and maintain community health and wellness.

Sincerely,

Jeff Guyett
Executive Director
Whitman County Public Health Department (WCPHD) COVID-19 Outbreak Response Plan

All COVID-19 positive results in Whitman County are acted upon within 24 hours of initial notification, with most case investigations and contact tracing completed within 24 hours of initial notification. We are currently establishing processes so that epidemiology staff can receive reports at home immediately upon submission from providers or laboratories.

WCPHD will continue to closely monitor long term care facilities and other vulnerable populations. We have established close contacts and communications with all long-term and assisted living facilities within the County. We have provided and participated with some surveillance monitoring (asymptomatic testing) of our largest LTC facilities. We have asked all LTC/AL Facilities to notify us immediately if any resident or staff test positive for COVID-19 or begin exhibiting symptoms. We have established protocols, processes and set aside PPE so that WCPHD staff can travel to smaller LTC/AL Facilities to test residents or staff if needed. We have set aside 500 test kits from the Department of Health’s Public Health Lab in the event that we have an outbreak in a long term care facility. If an outbreak were to occur, we would want to test every employee and resident of that facility. Currently our largest long term care facility has a residency of 160 and approximately 115 staff. We have also established relations with our two hospitals and primary care community that allow us to request and receive immediate assistance if a situation is large enough to need it.

WCPHD will notify WA State DOH of any outbreak in a congregate setting and request guidance and assistance as needed.
May 13, 2020

Whitman County Board of Health
310 N Main Street
Colfax, WA 99111

RE: REQUEST FOR VARIANCE ON STATE PHASED PLAN FOR RE-OPENING WHITMAN COUNTY

Please let this letter stand as support for the request of a variance on the state’s phased plan for re-opening operations in Whitman County.

The Sheriff’s Office is currently working with our Public Health Department and the Whitman County Emergency Operations Center on plans that safely work to reopen Whitman County for business and others operations. We are committed to the development and implementation of safe strategies that mitigate risk and support moving to Phase II.

Sincerely,

Brett J. Myers
Sheriff WCSO