



MEDIA RELEASE

San Juan County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 15, 2020

New Positive Test Result Reported on San Juan Island

June 15, 2020: San Juan County Health and Community Services staff have been notified of a new positive COVID-19 test result in San Juan County, on San Juan Island. This brings the total number of cases in San Juan County to 16.

This is the first positive case of COVID-19 in nearly six weeks and involves an employee of Roche Harbor Resort on San Juan Island. The employee is newly arrived to the island, and was tested via Roche Harbor's testing program that tests all of their new employees prior to working.

The County Health & Community Service Department's surveillance team is actively contact tracing this case. The close household contacts of the individual who tested positive are quarantining until they can be tested or otherwise found to be free of risk.

The patient's employer, Roche Harbor, has been actively supporting the effort to identify all potential exposures, and to minimize any chance of further transmission.

County Health Officer Dr. Frank James details the situation, "While remaining free of further cases in San Juan County would have been nice, our chances of doing so were always slim. This exact situation is something we have been preparing for. The employer did everything right. They're testing their employees before being allowed to start work and have been extremely responsive and cooperative with public health staff. With robust contact tracing we hope to be able to contain this case and prevent further spread. We will only know if we are successful after testing and close ongoing monitoring, but at the moment I'm optimistic. That optimism is due to very strong proactive approach by the employer and a quick response from the public health team."

Case investigation and contact tracing are the foundation of an effective public health response. It is labor intensive and challenging, with a goal of rapidly achieving containment.

Dr. James highlights the importance of remaining vigilant, "We know that people can be asymptomatic and still transmit the disease. Clearly many in our communities are relaxing habits and feeling more comfortable with a slow reopening. If we want to avoid community transmission and keep our businesses and islands open, we need to stay focused on frequent hand washing, social distancing, and covering our faces in public. Those are our very best tools to avoid community spread."

San Juan County health officials remind everyone that if you have symptoms of COVID (including a fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, nausea, sore throat, or diarrhea), please contact your medical provider immediately to discuss being tested.

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