



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Deaths of Pierce County Residents with COVID-19 are Accelerating as Cases Continue to Surge – In Response Pierce County Public Health Issues Gathering Size Advisory

Pierce County Public Health (PCPH) released an updated advisory limiting the size of indoor public gatherings. The advisory limits public gatherings to no more than 25% of a space's maximum capacity *or* no more than one person per 113 square feet in a space without defined occupancy limits. There are exemptions for schools, childcare, healthcare, houses of worship, and other settings that are outlined in the advisory found [here](#). The advisory will expire at the end of December, unless extended.

AZ Snyder, Health Officer/Public Health Director states, "Our hospitals are stressed. Our nursing homes are experiencing constant outbreaks. Our schools are struggling to stay open. The situation is serious, but it is not too late to turn this around for Pierce County. This advisory is one of many things Pierce County Public Health and partners are doing to support our community in getting our disease numbers back to something our healthcare system can manage."

Credible complaints for violation of this advisory order will be taken by the Pierce County Sheriff's Office. If investigations indicate a facility is violating the advisory, PCPH may issue a specific directive to the individual facility, providing an opportunity to correct or abate the violation. If then the facility does not comply with the specifics of their issued health directives, further enforcement may be pursued in court. "The majority of our community members are doing everything they can to keep each other safe. I believe it is possible to operate a business responsibly during the pandemic. This will just provide the rules in writing so we are all on the same page," said Snyder.

PCPH also urges the community to limit private gatherings. Places or events that are not open to the public are excluded from the new advisory outlining public gathering restrictions (i.e. an invitation-only wedding); however, COVID-19 is not only spreading in public settings. Snyder said "We can all save lives in our own community by choosing to forgo gatherings with extended family over the holidays."

The number of COVID-19 cases per week has jumped from 40 in the first week of October, to 449 the week of November 8th. Since our first Pierce County resident tested positive for COVID-19 in March, 19 Pierce County residents have died from COVID-19. Eleven of those deaths occurred in the past ten days.

END



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To promote healthy behaviors, prevent disease and injury, and protect against environmental hazards