

From: [Mayor](#)
To: [Mayor](#)
Subject: COVID-19 Update: COVID Care Coverage
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The City of Spokane COVID-19 News Update for June 16

Information about Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19) is evolving rapidly. We want to make sure our City employees have up-to-date information. We will provide this update, as needed, to communicate what you need to know, while we work to reduce the spread of this disease in our community and continue to provide critical public services.

A Message From the Mayor on COVID Testing & Treatment

Our employees continue to work diligently during this unconventional time, and we have made huge strides. However, some uncertainty remains about the impact COVID-19 could have on us and/or our family members relating to our health care. We cannot predict the future relating to the virus, however, we do have the ability to lessen one worry; the possibility of incurring unexpected medical bills relating to COVID-19.

To ease a possible financial burden, the City has directed Kaiser Permanente and Premera Blue Cross to extend the time period when employee cost shares will be waived for COVID-19 testing and treatments; through December 31, 2020.

This means that qualified and enrolled City of Spokane Employees and their Dependents will not pay copayments, deductibles, and coinsurance for all *in-network* COVID-19 testing and treatment (both inpatient and outpatient) through December 31, 2020. Our insurance is currently waiving cost shares for testing and related provider visits through October 1, 2020. This is an extension of that benefit. ***NOTE: This does not include COVID-19 Antibody Testing; this test is not currently covered under health insurance.***

As a reminder, Premera Blue Cross is reviewing claims, retroactively back to January 1, 2020, and reprocessing claims with COVID-19-related treatments or tests. If you have any Kaiser Permanente COVID-19 claims for health care services that date back to January 1, 2020, please ask your provider to re-bill Kaiser Permanente and the claim(s) will be reprocessed to waive your cost share.

If you have questions, please feel free to reach out to Employee Benefits at 625-6565, Kaiser Permanente Member Relations at 1-888-901-4636 or Premera Blue Cross Customer Service 1-800-722-1471.

I am hopeful this will assist you and your family plan for the months ahead. Please stay well while keeping a safe 6-foot distance from others!

IT Asks for Feedback on Virtual Tools

IT is asking employees to fill out a survey about the use and effectiveness of virtual collaboration tools—WebEx and Microsoft Teams (which is replacing Skype). Here is the link to take the survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/J8KGP5Q>. IT is asking for responses by Wednesday, June 17.

Masks Will Help Move Toward Phase 3

Spokane Regional Health District Health Director Bob Lutz has indicated that the Spokane community is not ready to move ahead to Phase 3 of the Safe Start Washington Plan. In particular, he cited high numbers of new COVID-19 cases in the last three weeks—about 350 of them. The number of those hospitalized has gone up to 12, including 8 in the ICU.

Getting to Phase 3 will require everyone to be vigilant and follow guidance around wearing masks and physically distancing. [Take a look at this blog post that Spokane Regional Health District developed on wearing masks](#) and why that is so important. And remember, City employees are required to wear masks.

Under new rules released by the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries that went into effect last week, employees will now be required to wear at least a cloth face mask at all times except when working alone in room, vehicle, or on jobsite, unless there is some other feasible measure (such as a partition between cubicles, sneeze guard, or other physical barrier) in place to prevent the spreading of the virus. Even if 6 feet of social distancing can be achieved, face coverings are now required.

Post Street Bridge Closure set for June 17!

Just one more reminder! Reconstruction of the Post Street Bridge is scheduled to begin on **Wednesday**,

June 17, and continue for the next 2 years. The **bridge will be closed completely** to all users—that means pedestrians and bicyclists since the bridge has been closed to vehicular traffic for the last year. Please plan accordingly if you use this bridge to get to City Hall or other destinations downtown or on the North Bank. [Here's the detour map.](#) Thanks for your patience.

More Information to Assist Our Employees

Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:

- [Positive Emotions and Your Health](#)
Do you look on the sunny side, or do you see a future filled with dark, stormy skies? A growing body of research suggests that having a positive outlook can benefit your physical health. National Institutes of Health (NIH)–funded scientists are working to better understand the links between your attitude and your body. They're finding some evidence that emotional wellness can be improved by developing individual skills.
- [Reduce job stress by improving emotional intelligence.](#)
Even if you are in a job where the environment has grown increasingly stressful, you can keep a considerable measure of self-control and self-confidence by understanding and practicing *emotional intelligence*. Emotional intelligence is the ability to manage and use your emotions in positive ways. Emotional intelligence is about communicating with others in ways that draw people to you, overcome differences, repair wounded feelings, and defuse tension and stress.

To access more topics related to COVID-19 visit: [EAPHelpLink.com](#), using company code: **CITSP0**

Employee Information Portal (covid19.spokanecity.org/)

Remember, this Employee Information Portal is a great resource for employees to stay current on what's happening with the COVID-19 response. The [Employee Information Portal](#) can be accessed from work or home, using a computer or mobile device. All of the emailed information we have sent to employees is archived here.