

From: [Mayor](#)
To: [Mayor](#)
Subject: COVID-19 Update: Talking about Opioids
Date: Tuesday, October 27, 2020 4:28:00 PM



A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Valerie Woodward".

The City of Spokane **COVID-19 News Update for Oct. 27**

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 Mayor Woodward

A public safety and health concern is silently working its way through our community largely undetected. While our focus has been on the spread of the COVID-19 virus for most of the year, a dangerous and deadly mix of opioids and its more pure form fentanyl have been wreaking havoc on our community.

The highly addictive and often quickly deadly drug has affected thousands of all ages. It has been especially devastating on our teens and young adults who have fallen into an addictive cycle or worse after ingesting a single pill.

That is why the City and the Spokane Police Department have partnered with the U.S. Attorney's Office, the DEA, and school superintendents across our community on the Opioid Fentanyl Outreach Project, a public education campaign about the dangers of opioids and fentanyl.

We are urging you to talk to you family members about these drugs that are turning up in schools and at parties. Even more challenging, in controlled amounts under close physician supervision, these drugs have a legitimate medical use. So, you can also help by carefully following the dosage amount if prescribed by your doctor, locking up your medications, and safely disposing of any pills that unused.

The danger is real and it's here in our community. The Spokane Fire Department has administered more than 1,100 doses of narcan since 2015 to counteract suspected opioid overdose. That's just under one dose a day from only one agency.

Let me leave you with one final thought about how dangerous and prevalent fentanyl is in our community. Think about the sugar packets at your table when you visit a restaurant. Each individual packet represents 500 doses of fentanyl.

So, please join me and our community partners in spreading the word, educating your friends and families about this dangerous drug, and stopping opioid addiction in our community. Visit [GetSmartAboutDrugs.gov](https://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov) for more information.

Planning for a Safe Halloween

Halloween is a great tradition, but it will require some additional thought and creativity to celebrate safely during the pandemic. The Spokane Regional Health District, the CDC, and other health professionals have put out ideas and tips. Our City team has compiled the information and put out some [great information in a blog post on the City's web site](#).

Election Guidance

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee today issued a [proclamation](#) and guidance [memo](#) today clarifying application of COVID-19 requirements for voters and for voting service operations, including county elections offices, county voting centers and student engagement HUBs throughout the state.

This proclamation temporarily suspends any COVID-related orders that could be interpreted to restrict access to voting centers and student engagement HUBS by persons intending to register to vote, obtain a ballot, receive assistance with a ballot, deposit a ballot or use other voting-related services.

"The right to vote is one of the cornerstones of our democracy," Inslee said. "Even in the middle of a pandemic, it's vital that everyone's voices are heard. We are dedicated to ensuring that anyone can cast their ballot in a safe manner and we are protecting the crucial election personnel and volunteers that make this democratic process possible."

Benefits Open Enrollment Starts Nov. 2

Human Resources has announced a "change-only" Open Enrollment period for benefit options this year. Employees who are not changing medical plans or adding/dropping dependents on their medical and dental plans are not required to access the information. The exception to this is those wishing to participate in one of the Flexible Spending Accounts for Health Care or Dependent Care in 2021.

Watch for the benefits booklet that will be mailed to the home address you have file with the City. Additional information also is available on the City's SharePoint Site. And, if you need help, please contact an Employee Benefits Team Member at 625.6565 or eracb@spokanecity.org.

More Information to Assist Our Employees

Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:

- [Seasonal affective disorder treatment: Choosing a light therapy box](#)

Here are some questions to think about when buying a lightbox for seasonal affective disorder:

- **Is it made specifically to treat SAD?** If not, it may not help your depression. Some light therapy lamps are designed for skin disorders — not for SAD. Lamps used for skin disorders primarily emit ultraviolet (UV) light and could damage your eyes if misused. Lightboxes used to treat SAD should filter out most or all UV light.
- **How bright is it?** Lightboxes produce different intensities of light. More brilliant boxes will require less time to use each day than dimmer boxes to achieve the same effect. Typically the recommended intensity of light is 10,000 lux.
- **How much UV light does it release?** Lightboxes for SAD should be designed to filter out most or all UV light. Contact the manufacturer for safety information if you have questions.

- [Children's Mental Health](#)

In childhood, mental health means reaching developmental and emotional milestones and learning healthy social skills, and coping with problems. Mentally healthy children have a positive quality of life and can function well at home, school, and in their communities.

To access more topics related to COVID-19 visit: EAPHelpLink.com, using company code: **CITSPO**

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.