

From: [Mayor](#)
To: [Mayor](#)
Subject: COVID-19 Update: A Reason for Optimism
Date: Tuesday, February 2, 2021 3:00:50 PM



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

The City of Spokane **COVID-19 News Update for Feb. 2**

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

Recent case counts and hospital capacity in Spokane are giving us reason for optimism. Over the past few weeks, the hospitalization rate more closely resembled summertime usage than the holiday season spike. And, daily case counts have more frequently dipped to levels that are consistent with numbers we saw before Halloween.

That is because of your commitment to community health and safety. We are optimistic those trends will continue to a point that will qualify our region for advancement to Phase 2 potentially as early as mid-month.

With that will come a responsibility to keep up our individual efforts so we can support the modest economic progress that comes with advancing. It takes all of us working together to keep moving forward, safely, as a community.

For our part, we continue to advocate on behalf of the community. That includes building and growing relationships and emphasizing better communication. We meet regularly with the Spokane Regional Health District to share data and information, discuss new ideas, and connect community members to the dialogue. Those conversations have been particularly productive during recent collaborations on needs for a high-capacity vaccination center, about safe holiday activities, and creative ways to lift up community events and new business partnerships moving forward.

The regional mayors are also discussing ideas that will keep our community focused on driving down case counts, reopening schools, and preparing to rebuild our economy. Our goal is to keep the ground we are gaining and keep moving. Communication with state elected officials is also a priority. We have maintained a dialogue with the Governor's Office and engaged the state senate majority leader on specific needs for our region.

All of these things take commitment. Addressing the needs of a community with diversity of thought, beliefs, and perspectives is a challenge best met through collaboration and communication.

Where to Get a Vaccine

In Washington state, we are currently in Phase 1B tier 1 of vaccine distribution. Anyone 65 and older, and all people 50 and older who also live in a multigenerational household, are now eligible to receive the vaccine. A great way to find out when you are eligible to get the vaccine is to use the [state's "Phase Finder" tool](#).

A bigger question this week for those who qualify is how to get a vaccine appointment. The large vaccine clinic at the Spokane Arena opened last week, and appointments quickly filled. Here is [information on that clinic](#). Online self-scheduling will be open when there are vaccine appointments available. Check the [CHAS Facebook page](#) for updates.

But the Arena clinic is far from the only place to receive a vaccine in Spokane. Check out [this list](#) on the Washington State Department of Health's site that lists a number of locations with links on how to schedule appointments.

A Safe Super Bowl

We know you know this, but here's what the CDC says about the Super Bowl. Gathering virtually or with the people you live with is the safest way to enjoy the Super Bowl this year. If you do have a small gathering with people who don't live with you, outdoors is safer than indoors.

The CDC suggests the following ideas:

Host a virtual Super Bowl watch party.

- Wear clothing or decorate your home with your favorite team's logo or colors.
- Make appetizers or snacks to enjoy with those you live with while watching the game. Share the recipes with your virtual attendees.
- Start a text group with other fans to chat (swear) about the game while watching.

Attend an outdoor viewing party where viewers can sit 6 feet apart.

- Use a projector screen to broadcast the game.
- Sit at least 6 feet away from people you don't live with.

A Look at COVID in the State of Washington

The Washington State Department of Health [released its latest statewide situation report](#) on Friday, which it described as showing some encouraging signs as well as some reasons for caution.

The report found that case counts have dropped sharply after the first week of January across the state and that transmission of the COVID-19 is declining. Total hospital admissions flattened starting in late November and are now declining.

At the same time, the DOH said that disease activity remains high and the state has detected its first cases of a COVID variant that spreads more easily and quickly. More COVID-19 data can be found on the [DOH data dashboard](#) and in the state's [Roadmap to Recovery dashboard](#).

More Information to Assist Our Employees

Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:

- [Controlling Anxious Thoughts in Difficult Times](#)
During this challenging time, it's no surprise that the number of employees accessing their

employee wellbeing resources is on the rise. According to counselors at our Employee Assistance Program, callers are reporting feelings of fear and anxiety. The uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus seems to be a common concern. The coronavirus pandemic is a global crisis, and feelings of stress, sadness, anger, and confusion are normal reactions. It takes time to adapt to an emergency and to create new ways to respond to it. While many often focus on the negatives, a crisis can also be an opportunity for positive change.

- **Setting goals for yourself.** Check out [this tip sheet](#) from the Employee Assistance Program on how to use the “SMART” method to create a plan of attack to reach your goal.

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.