

The City of Spokane

Weekly News Update for Jan. 25

Information about COVID-19 is evolving rapidly, and our important work as a City is continuing. We want to make sure our City employees have up-to-date information on both COVID and employee news. 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.

Moving to Virtual Meetings

The latest surge in COVID cases is impacting City employees with the same greatly increased frequency being experienced in our community and country. New employee cases have been reported at pandemic highs each of the past two weeks. Those cases are originating inside and outside of the workplace.

For those reasons, the following immediate steps and reminders are being taken to help slow the spread of illness amongst City employees and their families:

- **MEETINGS AND TRAININGS:** Effective immediately, meetings and training are moving to a virtual environment. Any in-person meetings that are not time sensitive should be postponed at least until next month.
- **MASKING:** Masking in the workplace is required except when you are alone in your immediate workstation or assigned work vehicle. Compliance will be strictly enforced. Repeated violations can result in a record of counseling and entering into the progressive discipline process. N95 masks are available for City staff. Requests should be made to your supervisor.
- **VACCINATION:** Per guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, [up to date](#) on [vaccination](#) is now defined as having received both doses of either the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine within the past 6 months or the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine within the past 2 months or you have received a COVID-19 booster.
- **TESTING:** Residential households in the U.S. can [order one set of four free at-home COVID tests](#) from [USPS.com](#). Orders will ship free starting late this month.

Modeling suggests the current surge may peak locally at the end of the month. Returning to in-person meetings and trainings will be re-evaluated in February.

Please take every precaution to keep your colleagues and their families safe and free from illness.

COVID At-Home Test Reimbursement

The Federal Government recently released guidance on insurance coverage for at home COVID-19 tests effective January 15, 2022.

- These tests can be found online or at different pharmacy locations
- Any testing that is considered “surveillance” (e.g., work, school, travel related, etc.) will not be covered
- You may be asked to attest that the test(s) that have been purchased are for Member and/or family use and are for diagnostic testing

Please note: Tests purchased prior to January 15, 2022 will not be covered by insurance.

Below you will find how our medical insurance carriers are currently handling reimbursement to their Members.

Premera

Members need to keep their receipt(s) and submit a claim to get reimbursed. [Click here for to the claim form.](#)

Kaiser

Members need to keep their receipt(s) and submit a claim to get reimbursed. You must be logged into the [Member Portal](#). You will then follow the path to COVID-19 Resources and “Submit a Claim.”

More Information to Assist You

Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:

- [Legal and Financial Planning for People with Dementia Part 2](#)
Health care providers cannot act as legal or financial advisers, but they can encourage planning discussions between patients and their families. Doctors can also guide patients, families, the care team, attorneys, and judges regarding the patient's ability to make decisions. During the annual wellness visit, discussing advance care planning decisions with a doctor is free through Medicare. Private health insurance may also cover these discussions. Additionally, geriatric care managers are trained social workers or nurses who can help people with dementia and their families. Contact your employee support program for additional information and resources to help with this process.

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.