



**Region 6 – COVID-19 – County Response  
Meeting Notes  
Adams – Chelan – Douglas – Grant – Okanogan Counties**

**Wednesday, April 29, 2020  
8:30 am – 10:00 am**

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**FACILITATORS:** Jaime Bodden, WSALPHO and Mellani McAleenan, WSAC

**ELECTED COUNTY OFFICIALS & STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:**

**Adams**

Vicki Guse, Administrator; Karen Potts, Community Health Director; Terry Thompson, Commissioner

**Chelan**

Bob Bugert, Commissioner; Doug England, Commissioner; Cathy Mulhall, Administrator

**Douglas**

Jenny Fasching, Executive Assistant; Dan Sutton, Commissioner

**Grant**

Cindy Carter, Commissioner

**Okanogan**

Chris Branch, Commissioner

**Legislators:**

Rep. Keith Goehner, Sen. Christine Rolfes, Rep. Joe Schmick, Sen. Shelly Short

**Legislative Staff:**

Jeff Olsen, Sandra Richartz, Kellen Wright,

**LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE**

Theresa Adkinson, Administrator – Grant County Health District

- Appreciates the support her office has received from the elected officials
- Grateful for the loaned 20 laptops from the WSC Extension
- Began monitoring returning travelers; first case was in March
- The health office worked hard on getting out the message to the community and to help them understand what COVID-19 was
- Worked through the emergency management system helped in showing a unified approach, staff worked out of the Sheriff's Office
- County government and public health came together to face this new pandemic
- Everyone was learning about the virus and learning how to respond to the virus
- Currently seeing COVID fatigue throughout the community

## **CHALLENGES AND LOOKING AHEAD**

- Hope there will be fewer cases and fewer people getting tested.
- What will the exposure risk be?
- How do we open businesses in a safe and responsible manner?

## **IMPACT ON COUNTY FUNCTIONS**

### **Adams:**

- Commissioners have heard the concerns from the public to reopen their businesses.
- Adams County has a small number of cases.
- Would like to reopen the courthouse, but will wait another 2 weeks, possible date – May 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Would like to request very specific guidelines on how to reopen businesses in a safe way.

### **Chelan:**

- The current population in jail is felons.
- Building permits are down.

### **Douglas:**

- Foreseeing loss of revenue in sales and gas revenues.
- Building permits are down.
- Trying to project the budget – possibly a loss of \$800,000.
- Hiring/spending freeze will possibly be enforced.
- 10% cut in department.
- Future elections – social distancing will need to be enforced, as the community usually desires to vote in person.

### **Grant:**

- Serious concerns with the small businesses – will there be funding for the self-employed?
- When will they be allowed to reopen?

### **Okanogan:**

- Loss of income – very serious budget concerns.
- Small business community is getting restless – new campaign “Open Okanogan” – which businesses express their desire to open with “soft opening” plans.
- Case numbers are slowly increasing in the county – shortage of testing supplies.
- Would like to work with the Governor’s office and ask for some local control regarding opening the community.

## **ANTICIPATED NEEDS MOVING FORWARD**

### **Adams:**

- Farmers are struggling – have an overabundance of product – no one is buying; 2 local plants will see significant cuts – possible layoffs, as there is no market to buy their products.
- Small businesses are feeling the financial crunch.
- Will feel the loss of sales tax.

### **Chelan:**

- Moving forward – unsure of what the loss of tax dollars will be.
- Will possibly use their reserves but looking forward to 2021 & 2022 is very worrisome.
- The fruit industry has been hit hard – staggering numbers with a fear a work force shortage.
- With no labor force to pick the fruit, it affects the whole community – packing warehouses will be closed, which will have a significant consequence for the county.

### **Douglas:**

- Local hospitals have been severely affected – laying off staff, as there are no elective surgeries.
- 10% in possible cuts – loss of \$2 million dollars.
- Layoff of county staff will impact the ability to provide services to the public.

### **Grant:**

- Local hospitals will be laying off staff, with budget implications.
- Agriculture industry has been severely impacted – companies are giving away food since there are no buyers.

### **Okanogan:**

- What will the impact be on the county with delayed tax payments?
- It's possible to extend the dates for property taxes.
- Fruit industry – serious concerns about an adequate work force.
- The county is prepared to open some departments but will continue to watch the case numbers.