Washington State Department of Health

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News Release

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Español

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Statement on statewide face covering order expansion

Today, the secretary of health's statewide face covering order will expand to require face coverings in any indoor setting outside of your home (not just public buildings) and expands the outdoor requirement to non-public settings when you can't maintain 6 feet of distance from non-household members. This includes common spaces in congregate living settings, such as common areas in apartment buildings condos, fraternity/sorority houses, assisted living facilities and other similar places. This is part of our continuing effort to reduce the increasing spread of COVID-19 in all parts of Washington.

Washingtonians came together once and changed the way we interact to reduce COVID-19 case counts, hospitalizations and deaths. We've lost our momentum, and case counts are worse across the state now than they were at our previous peak and the number of hospitalizations are again increasing. The current orders about face coverings are intended to increase the use of face coverings and emphasize their critical importance to our overall strategy to slow the spread of COVID-19. As many as 30 to 50 percent of infections occur before people have symptoms. You could be infected and not know it, but a cloth face covering greatly reduces the distance respiratory droplets travel, and that protects everyone.

Staying home is still the best way to slow the spread of COVID-19. Congregating indoors in groups outside your household members – like birthday, anniversary, and retirement parties; book clubs; and just to socialize and hang out - is one of the worst things we can do

right now. The same is true for outdoor gatherings when at least 6 feet of distance isn't maintained at all times. As hard as it is, we need to avoid these types of social activities. If you must go out, keep at least six feet between you and others, wash your hands often and wear a cloth face covering. Finally, if you have any COVID-19 symptoms, even mild ones, stay away from others and get tested right away.

Each of us can help slow the spread of COVID-19. Stay home. When you're out, keep your distance and wear a face covering. Wash your hands. Get tested if you have symptoms. Washingtonians and their communities are strong. We did this once, and we can do it again.

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