

Washington State Coronavirus Response (COVID-19)

South Central Region hospital misreports COVID admissions; Department of Health moves region to Phase 2

February 14, 2021

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Public inquiries: State COVID-19 Assistance Hotline, 1-800-525-0127

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) announced that a hospital in the South Central Region of the Healthy Washington Plan misreported data which led to a determination that the region remain in Phase 1 of Governor Jay Inslee’s [Roadmap to Recovery](#) phased reopening plan. When the region did not move to Phase 2, it was brought to the attention of DOH that a hospital in the region appeared to be incorrectly reporting its hospital admission data.

After learning that the hospital, Providence St. Mary Medical Center, in Walla Walla was reporting COVID hospital admission data incorrectly, the Department of Health began working with the facility to correct the reporting mistake by the hospital.

Utilizing the facility’s updated information, the hospital admission metric for the South Central region was re-calculated and DOH concluded the region did meet the required metric criteria and will now advance to Phase 2 effective immediately. The Roadmap to Recovery dashboard will be updated with this information on Tuesday.

“On Friday, Feb. 12, Providence St. Mary Medical Center discovered an error in its reporting of COVID-19 positive patients admitted to the hospital, and immediately provided corrected data to the Washington Department of Health. The error was unintentional, and we acted as quickly as possible to provide corrected data to the state. We hope this corrected information will be helpful in assessing whether our communities are ready to move to Phase 2 of the Governor’s reopening plan, and we appreciate our partnership with the state that has allowed us to correct this error,” said Susan Blackburn, Chief Executive at Providence St. Mary Medical Center.

“When errors like this happen, our DOH team is committed to getting things corrected as quickly as possible. We are pleased that partners in the South Central region brought this issue to our attention and we were able to resolve the matter quickly,” said Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH, Secretary of Health.

Earlier in the week, DOH determined that five regions could move to Phase 2. Two regions had already advanced to Phase 2, bringing the total regions in Phase 2 to seven. At that time, South Central remained in Phase 1.

Regions are required to meet criteria for **three of the four metrics** outlined in the Roadmap to Recovery plan in order to move into or remain in Phase 2. The four metrics include:

- Trend in 14-day rate of new COVID-19 cases per 100k population
- Trend in 14-day rate of new COVID-19 hospital admissions per 100k population
- Average 7-day percent occupancy of ICU staffed beds
- 7-day percent positive of COVID-19 tests

DOH reassesses the metrics for all eight regions every two weeks and announce any phase adjustments on Thursdays. The next announcement will be Thursday, February 25, 2021 for implementation and possible phase movement on March 1, 2021.

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