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## **Snohomish County Approves Additional COVID-19 Response**

**SNOHOMISH COUNTY, Wash., December 23, 2020** – Today, the Snohomish County Council approved the recommendation of Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers to appropriate \$13.2 million for the County’s COVID-19 response in 2021. The resources will be spent on Snohomish County’s Department of Emergency Management (\$5 million), Snohomish County’s Department of Human Services (\$4 million), the Snohomish Health District (\$3 million), Economic Development (\$1 million), and Public Safety (\$200,000).

“Because we carefully planned our use of limited federal dollars, we are in a position to continue our pandemic response into 2021,” said Snohomish County Council Chair Nate Nehring. “Everyone impacted by the pandemic, whether from the disease itself or its economic consequences, should know that Snohomish County is united in finding solutions and getting us all back on our feet.”

“The health and well-being of our community and rebuilding our economy remain top priorities,” said Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers. “By continuing to invest in our response, we are supporting those working on the front lines of the pandemic. I am thankful for the strong partnerships we have in the community as we work together through these challenging times. Snohomish County is grateful to our congressional delegation for providing additional flexibility to help us continue our efforts into 2021.”

“The Snohomish Health District has done life-saving work to conduct contact tracing, maximize testing capability, help develop a plan for vaccine distribution, and otherwise keep our community as healthy as possible,” said Chair of the Board of Health Stephanie Wright. “These funds will be crucial for continuing our work into 2021 and preparing for the next stage of the pandemic. I thank our Members of Congress for their work throughout this year to help Local Health Jurisdictions with their vital efforts.”

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect many across our region and country, and even as vaccines start to make their way to more people in Snohomish County, there is no evidence that the crisis will slow anytime soon.

Therefore, the Executive recommended and the Council approved the following:

### **Department of Emergency Management: \$5 million**

Since its activation on March 1, 2020, the Snohomish County Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) has focused on meeting the benchmarks established by Governor Inslee's Safe Start Plan and reducing the secondary impacts of COVID-19 on Snohomish County residents. Those two areas of emphasis include several lines of effort that need to continue in 2021. The County also will provide resources to implement the county's mass vaccination plan.

Providing personal protective equipment (PPE) and keeping our isolation and quarantine facility (IQF) operational represent two efforts that will continue to keep our residents safe and move us forward under the conditions of the Safe Start Plan. We made significant investments in PPE and believe that continuing to operate our PPE warehouse may be adequate in 2021. We may also need to provide PPE to support mass vaccination points of distribution. The IQF provides relief to our congregate shelters and our healthcare system.

Supporting our established food network and ensuring the availability of childcare for essential workers reduce the secondary impacts of COVID-19 on Snohomish County residents. Our food security work includes food distribution to our most at-risk residents via the Nourishing Neighborhoods program; it also includes support to school district lunch programs and our food banks. We continue to partner with the Boys and Girls Club and YMCA of Snohomish County to provide childcare to our essential workers. Both efforts are necessary for the foreseeable future.

This funding will also continue work being done in the ECC and Joint Information Center to ensure a well-coordinated response and messaging. The importance of these efforts is only heightened as we move into the vaccination phase of the outbreak. It is critical that we work closely with our partners to make vaccine available as widely as possible to our 840,000 residents, including our historically marginalized communities. This is the path toward reclaiming our community's health and restoring the economy.

### **Human Services: \$4 million**

With this funding, the Human Services Department will continue all areas of work that have been funded with CARES/Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) dollars into the first quarter of 2021.

That work includes: Continuation of eviction prevention rental assistance; continuation of Northwest Washington 2-1-1 expanded information and referral services; continuation of the Community COVID Outreach Program which provides behavioral health services throughout the County; continuation of the seasonal, day and night shelter at United Church of Christ; continuation of day sheltering operations at Carnegie (night costs being funded with other surge funds); continuation of cold weather sheltering supports; continuation of emergency services vouchers through the Family Support Center network; continuation of behavioral health supports for families participating in childcare/early learning programs; continuation of telephone reassurance for individuals experiencing anxiety and other challenges; and continuation of street outreach and connection to motel rooms, housing and services.

## **Health District: \$3 million**

The District has been providing services either independently or in collaboration, primarily with the Executive's Office and Snohomish County DEM. Those same efforts are expected to be maintained to the fullest extent possible by utilizing funds made available to the District through the County. Those activities include community based testing, case investigation and contact tracing, outreach investigation and control teams, vaccine implementation planning, and communications.

Disease Containment Activities - These include testing, case investigation and contact tracing. These three services are closely linked and are central parts of national strategies focused on identifying where active disease is present and working to prevent further transmission. The District is currently operating test sites at Everett Memorial Stadium, Everett Community College, Evergreen State Fair Park, Lynnwood Food Bank, and periodically in Sultan, with tentative plans to expand further into southern and northern Snohomish County. Combined, these sites are currently collecting up to 1,000 tests per day. This represents a significant portion of the total number of tests being performed in Snohomish County. Case investigation and contact tracing teams (approximately 60 temp staff at any given time) are working seven days a week to speak with people who have tested positive, as well as their contacts. Education for self-isolation and quarantine is provided. In some cases, care coordination (medications, groceries, etc.) also are provided to keep patients at home during their infectious period.

Disease Prevention Activities - This is primarily focused on two areas: one specific to the District and the other a collaborative effort with DEM. Outreach investigation and control teams are tied to disease containment, but a significant portion of this work centers around infection prevention and control education as well as consultation with employers, long term care facilities, and other community partners. The goal of these teams has been to provide proactive technical assistance and rapid intervention to limit spread in known outbreaks. The second, collaborative activity is vaccine planning. By nature, this is a foundational public health activity. However, the focus of collaborative efforts has been on planning scenarios outside of normal vaccine distribution. It is important to acknowledge that this activity is not funded through CARES Act dollars.

Communications - This has been one of our most collaborative efforts throughout the pandemic. Ensuring a well-coordinated messaging strategy has been, and will continue to be, critical work in the coming months. This importance is only heightened as we move into the vaccination phase of the outbreak, where outreach to our historically marginalized communities will be vital to build trust in the vaccine's safety and effectiveness.

Overall, the anticipated burn rate is approximately \$1 million per month in November and December for Health District activities in response to the pandemic. The surge in cases has necessitated increasing the number of testing sites and staff focused on COVID-related activities. This \$3 million will fund activities at current resource levels through February and potentially all of March.

## **Economic Development: \$1 million**

In 2020, Snohomish County has provided grants to small businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19. This \$1 million will allow us to fund additional grants through our R3 program.

**Public Safety: \$200k**

During the latter part of 2020, the Sheriff's Office submitted a request for a complete body scanner for Corrections use. They had one previously, but it no longer operational. This request was approved by the Essential Government Services Committee, but the scanner was unable to be received by December 30, 2020, thereby making this purchase ineligible for CARES Act funding. The Committee believes that this purchase will drastically reduce the potential risk of exposure to COVID-19 by Corrections staff. This equipment would scan both the body and the clothing of every arrestee being booked into the facility for contraband without the need for staff to touch anyone. This would also better position the department to be in compliance with social distancing mandates.

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