



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Large-Scale Community Vaccination Clinic Coming in March

Whatcom County, WA — Today, a community collaboration of healthcare providers, including Bellingham Technical College, Family Care Network, PeaceHealth, Sea Mar Community Health Centers, Unity Care NW, Whatcom Community College and the Whatcom County Health Department announce plans to open a large-scale community COVID-19 vaccination clinic.

“We are pleased to announce that Bellingham Technical College has agreed to host the community vaccination site,” said Shanon Hardie, Unity Care NW’s chief operations officer and co-chair of the Whatcom County Large-Scale Vaccine Planning Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee anticipates opening the vaccine clinic in March, depending on vaccine availability. The group’s goal is to vaccinate 5,000 people at this site per week, depending on the reliability of weekly vaccine shipments from the state. The group is working diligently to finalize details including operations, staffing and other logistics.

“Bellingham Technical College is proud to continue its over-60-year tradition of serving the Whatcom County community by participating in this vaccination effort,” said BTC Interim President Walter Hudsick.

At a time when the community’s healthcare professionals are under considerable strain, the assistance offered by BTC provides much needed resources for this project. In addition to hosting the vaccination site on its campus, students in BTC’s nursing program will help staff the site.

“The BTC Nursing Program is excited to partner with this team and participate in a substantial way in the COVID-19 recovery plan for our community. Nursing students stand ready to assist the community vaccination effort and look forward to serving our community,” said Julie Samms, Bellingham Technical College’s Dean of Nursing and Allied Health.

Nursing students from Whatcom Community College’s nursing program will also lend their expertise and help staff the vaccination site.

“The partnership between the health department, healthcare providers, and local community and technical colleges is an incredible opportunity for WCC’s nursing students to gain hands-on experience while directly supporting county-wide efforts to keep our community safe,” said Grace Kolodychuk, WCC’s nursing program director. “This project will be successful because industry partners are working together.”

The community vaccination clinic will abide by the Washington State Department of Health's phased guidelines for vaccine eligibility. Whatcom County is currently in Phase 1B Tier 1 of vaccine distribution. Those currently eligible for vaccination include anyone 65 and older, all people 50 and older who live in multigenerational households, workers in healthcare settings and long-term care facility staff and residents. Demand for the vaccine still exceeds supply. All parties are hopeful vaccine shipments will increase in the coming weeks.

"It's an honor to work collaboratively with our partners to develop plans for a community vaccination clinic that will be open to all," said Erika Lautenbach, director of the Whatcom County Health Department. "When Whatcom County works together we can do more than if we worked alone."

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine, visit www.whatcomcounty.us/covidvaccine or www.covidvaccinewa.org.



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