

CEO HIGHLIGHTS

June 2020

COVID-19 Edition v.2

State Department of Health indicates that on June 1, 2020, there were 21,977 cases of COVID-19 in Washington State with 1,124 associated deaths and as of June 11, 2020, there currently are 24,652 cases of COVID-19 with 1,190 associated deaths. There remains ongoing threat of this disease, and we celebrate that health professionals and epidemiological modeling experts predict we have passed the peak of the first wave of COVID-19 in WA. Nevertheless, the State of Emergency remains and only select modifications to the Stay Home-Stay Healthy are permitted. As an essential service, PacMtn will continue to find ways to deliver services in accordance with the regulations being promulgated by the Governor, Department of Health and County Commissions.

PacMtn is actively developing its Plan for Return to Office (RTO), in-person services, in accordance with the stated permissions, best science and Center for Disease Control. Many templates and examples exist. We are working closely with our State agency partners to ensure as much consistency as is reasonable throughout the local workforce systems, given varying conditions. To date we are pleased we know of no active COVID-19 cases amongst PacMtn staff.

COVID-19 Response...See also COVID-19 Impact PPT.

- Cumulative Initial Unemployment Claims week 11-21..**79,567**
- Initial claims are trending rapidly downward. Waiting to see if they go all the way down to pre-COVID-19 normal or plateau above.
- Broken supply chains will take time to heal – second wave ripple effect layoffs already happening.
- PUA and PEUC attracted a lot of applications in the first week and then cooled off quickly.
- Claims processing may still be dealing with severe backlogs for a while.
- ESD will continue to need extra staff to help with fraudulent claims. Activation of the National Guard may provide needed support.

New Funding.... helps us serve. PacMtn will receive a portion of the awards made to the State for Disaster Recovery (\$670K) and Employment Recovery (TBD estimated @ \$900K = proportional share of \$12mil). Our Disaster Recovery efforts will focus on food sustainability and provision of recovery jobs/training specific to strengthening food systems. Employment Recovery is still under design, but with so little funding the emphasis will be on providing work-based learning opportunities that will help job seekers in this challenging labor market environment. We know the Federal Government is also considering additional appropriation for Dislocated Worker, Youth and Adult funding streams.

Helping the Helpers... in recognition of the challenges faced by helping professionals in the era of COVID-19 PacMtn offered two trainings designed by staff member, Jackie Velasco. Times like this often take a toll in the mental health and well-being of those committed to do the “work of helping”. Jackie’s training is about working with people in crisis and managing boundaries and self-care. She has experience from previous work at our local Crisis Clinic, and developed the trainings to be engaging and interactive. Each training is 2 hours long. WE invited regional partners and WDC staff from around the state for these virtual, no cost trainings.

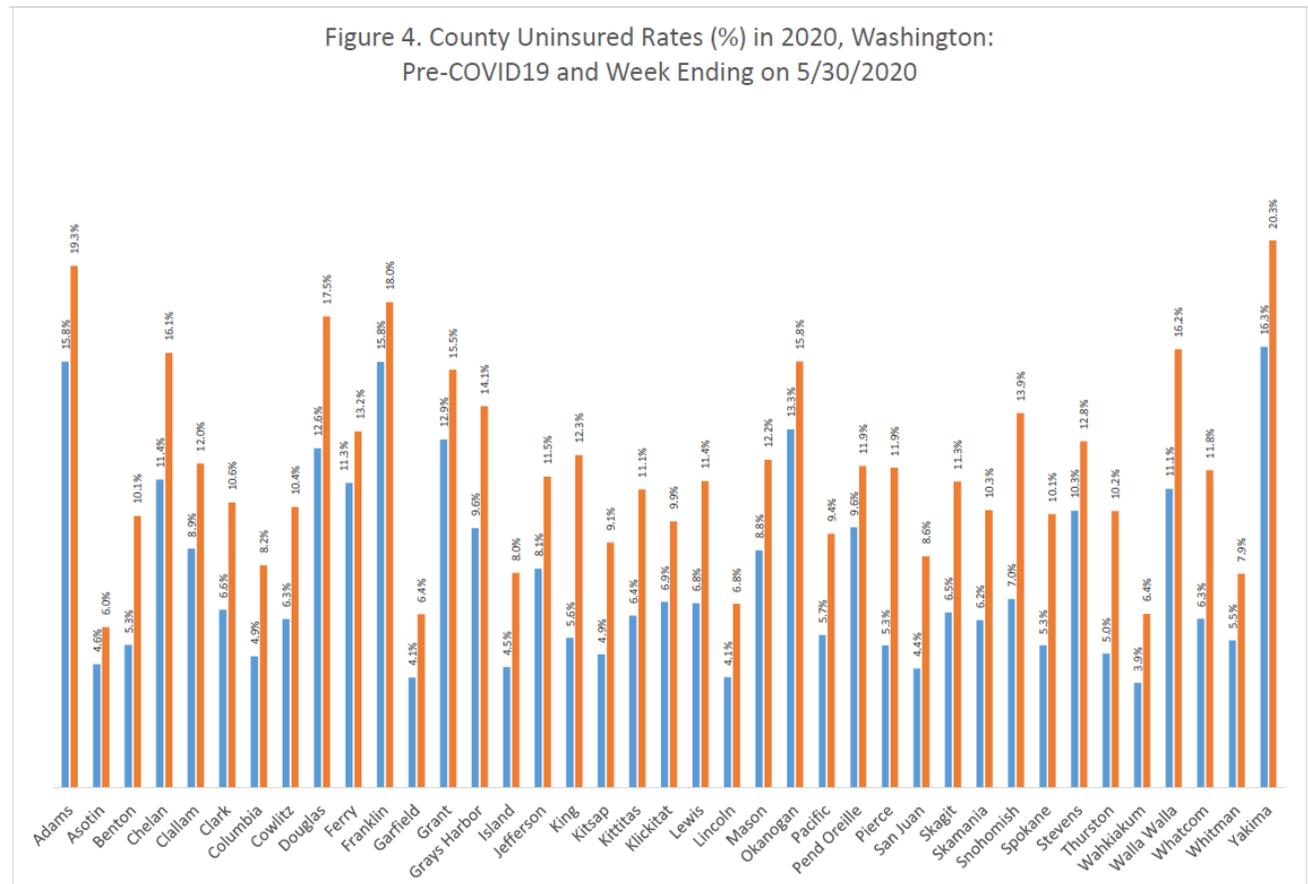
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PacMtn Region Uninsured Rate % Soars... Since most healthcare plans are employer-provided, job losses have had a big impact, especially for those without access to COBRA or Medicaid. From the beginning of the year to May 23, the number of uninsured nearly doubled from 502,300 to 1,010,700. Typically, the uninsured rate for the newly unemployed is around 9%. Statewide that rate went up to 58% during the COVID period. The chart below provides uninsured rates by county. Workforce development agencies are concerned about such numbers as overall health and access to healthcare are part of the determinants of community health and worker welfare.

Figure 4. County Uninsured Rates (%) in 2020, Washington:
Pre-COVID19 and Week Ending on 5/30/2020



Support for Commissioner Levine... Washington Workforce Association sent the attached letter to the Governor expressing support for ESD Commissioner Levine.