



**King County**

**Rod Dembowski**

Councilmember, District 1

**Metropolitan King County Council**

March 18, 2020

Dear Constituents:

I'm writing to ask for your help. As we all know, the COVID-19 pandemic that is shaking the world, has hit King County particularly hard. As I write, your public health department which is one of the best in the nation, is leading the effort to combat the spread of this virus. The nation is looking to us and watching our response.

Because there is no vaccine for COVID-19, the basic public health response, as you're seeing, rests upon the principle of separation and distancing to blunt its spread and reduce the expected peak number of infections in our population. Most of us will be able to participate in this effort by staying home and keeping our distance from one another when interactions are required. But where there are vulnerable people in a household, or a person's housing status puts others at risk, we need to have a place for folks who need to be isolated, to stay. We also need capacity to give relief to our hospitals. As I write this, every hospital in King County is near or at capacity. We need to have places for folks to be assessed and to recover where they can receive care and not overwhelm our medical system.

King County is working to identify locations for 3,000 temporary beds for this purpose, countywide. Our first two sites were in White Center and Kent. We have identified two additional sites in Seattle, one on Elliot and one off Aurora at 128th. We are activating a site in Bellevue and have leased a motel in Issaquah.

In partnership with the cities, school districts and fire departments in North King County, we have been working to identify additional sites to respond to this national emergency. Over the last few days, after assessing a number of sites in the City of Shoreline, we identified as most feasible the temporary use of athletic fields adjacent to the swimming pool and the Shoreline Center. On Monday, March 16, I personally visited the site with representatives from the county, the city and the school district.

The city, at the county's request, has authorized construction of two, 20,000 square-foot temporary structures. The Shoreline School District is a partner in this effort as well. The site was selected because it is flat, has drainage, is lit, has necessary utilities, and is reasonably accessible. Scheduled uses of the fields had already been canceled as a result of the public health department's orders. The city will be reimbursed for all costs, the fields will be fully restored and fair rent will be paid. While the length of use is unknown at this time, it could be concluded in early summer if things go well.

While construction has been authorized, occupancy has not yet been authorized. We will work together to have appropriate safety, 24/7 security, transportation and operational plans in place to mitigate impacts before the site is opened. There is a chance, depending on the success of our social distancing campaign, that the site may not be used at all or may be lightly used.

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I understand that you will have questions that are not answered by this brief note. I am sharing a frequently asked question (“FAQ”) sheet provided by our department of community and human services that provides more information.

I want to express my sincere gratitude and deep appreciation for your partnership and support during these trying times. I ask for the support of the Echo Lake, Meridian Park and North City neighborhoods, in particular. The City of Shoreline and its leadership and the school district’s leadership have been heartwarming and represent the best of Shoreline’s long-standing values of service and sacrifice for the betterment of community. I ask that we come together as part of our collective community response to COVID-19 and do what we can to make this necessary medical facility a success.

I welcome your feedback and suggestions. Please reach out to me at [Rod.Dembowski@KingCounty.gov](mailto:Rod.Dembowski@KingCounty.gov)

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rod Dembowski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rod" being particularly prominent.

Rod Dembowski  
King County Councilmember  
District One

## **Frequently Asked Questions – Isolation & Quarantine**

### **What is isolation?**

**Isolation** is used for people who are currently ill and able to spread the disease and who need to stay away from others in order to avoid infecting them.

### **What is quarantine?**

**Quarantine** is for people who are not currently showing symptoms, but are at increased risk for having been exposed to an infectious disease.

### **Who is likely to be temporarily housed in Isolation and Quarantine sites?**

Examples of people who may occupy the facilities:

- First responders and health care workers
- Travelers
- People who can't safely self-isolate or quarantine at home, e.g., a student living in a congregate dorm room
- People experiencing homelessness

### **Why do we need this action?**

It is critical to do all that we can to 1) reduce the spread of the illness; and 2) keep our hospital beds available for people with acute healthcare needs. Public Health has been clear that isolation and quarantine help keep the community safe by containing illness.

### **How many beds are available at each location?**

Kent: 30 rooms initially. Total capacity is 84.

White Center: Eight modular units with four separate rooms per unit. Total: 32

Aurora: Six modular units with four separate rooms per unit. Total 24

Interbay: Room for 72 persons.

### **Can people bring their pets to the Isolation and Quarantine facilities?**

No, but King County has made arrangements to board any pets at the Regional Animal Services of King County for the duration of a person's stay in isolation and quarantine.

### **How will we decide who stays in these facilities?**

Public Health-Seattle & King County will triage calls to the King County COVID Call Center and assess individual need for isolation or quarantine. They will make a determination of the need for self-isolation at home or assignment to a facility. A referral will be made by PHSKC.

### **How will they get there?**

Transportation to and from will be provided by the most appropriate source, including ambulances or other contracted transportation providers.

**How will you monitor the health of those in the facilities?**

Isolation and quarantine is a proven Public Health practice, giving people a place where they can go to wait out their exposure and keep their family members safe. In most cases, isolation and quarantine monitoring is handled via regular telephone contact. Trained health and, where appropriate, behavioral health professionals will speak regularly with each person in I&Q and monitor any changes in health status and any need for additional care.

**Will there be onsite medical assistance?**

In most cases, health and behavioral health care will be closely monitored by phone. As the situation in our community changes, it may be necessary to make changes in our response, including the possibility of adding an onsite medical or behavioral health component.

**Will there be onsite security?**

Yes, there will be 24/7 onsite security at all locations and an on-site manager.

**How will people get their other needs met - food, water and other supplies?**

Staff will check in with every patient multiple times per day to identify any needs, including food, water, or other requests. Supplies will be delivered to their door. There will be no person-to-person contact between patients and delivery persons.

**Who will provide the food?**

King County is contracting with FareStart and possibly other food delivery outlets. Dietary restrictions, allergies and cultural needs will be addressed through the food options.

**Will the individuals be allowed to leave the premises?**

Isolation and quarantine means that you stay away from the general public. Every person will have a phone number they can call if they need anything, or if their condition changes. In addition, staff will check in with every patient multiple times per day to identify any needs. Supplies will be delivered to their door. They will have no need to go out to get anything.

**Who decides when they get to leave? Will they have transportation upon departure?**

Medical staff will monitor each person's condition and make an individual determination as to when it is safe for the individual to leave the isolation and quarantine site. They will receive transportation to return to their home or shelter when they have been cleared to leave by PHSKC staff.

**Why were communities not consulted in advance of siting?**

Executive Constantine signed a proclamation of emergency, enabling the County to take swift measure to find locations that could house people in isolation and recovery, to maintain the effectiveness of our overall health system. In an emergency, swift action is key. The County's

real estate people identified and moved on properties that met the requirements of Public Health. We are communicating with communities in Kent, White Center, and Seattle, the first locations announced. We are meeting with community-based organizations, local businesses, and residents to explain the unfolding situation and to gather their questions and respond. The Executive Office and the Department of Local Services have been leading this work. We are absolutely committed to ongoing communications with our communities and our residents.

King County is in negotiations on additional properties throughout the region. This is a countywide emergency. It is not contained to one city or neighborhood, but is an emergency for our entire region. Subsequent announcements from the City of Seattle and King County have identified additional sites on land owned by the city or county. King County is continuing to explore additional sites countywide.

**How will you get information to people who speak languages other than English?**

The Public Health website has information available in multiple languages on the COVID-19 outbreak, including what to do if you suspect you have been exposed to the illness or are experiencing symptoms. The King County emergency appropriations ordinance includes funding for language access services, community engagement and outreach/education pertaining to the COVID-19 response.

**What is the future use of these locations?**

We are focused on the public health emergency and creating spaces for people to safely isolate and quarantine. Future use of any of the emergency community services locations being created now is a conversation for a future time.

**How does community connect to ask questions about sites?**

If there are questions that are not included in this FAQ sheet, please contact our 'contact us' via the dedicated subcategory on this issue at (<https://blue.kingcounty.gov/about/contact/>)