



# News

King County Executive  
**Dow Constantine**

## Executive Constantine statement on updated COVID-19 restrictions

November 15, 2020

### Summary

**"The number of hospitalizations in King County last week increased by over 70 percent compared to the previous four weeks. There are twice as many people in local hospitals with COVID-19 as there were just a month ago. This is the most critical issue: We have to reverse this trend before our hospitals become overwhelmed."**

### Story

King County Executive Dow Constantine delivered the following statement at Gov. Jay Inslee's press conference announcing new guidance on how to slow the spread of COVID-19, and new restrictions in place until Dec. 14:

"Like everywhere in the state, our case counts are soaring, and that is also true nationally. The number of hospitalizations in King County last week increased by over 70 percent compared to the previous four weeks.

"In fact, it was just earlier this week that I was reflecting that our hospitalizations had not increased dramatically, and then later that afternoon I was informed that we had seen a 30 percent increase in one day in hospital bed use. There are twice as many people in local hospitals with COVID-19 as there were just a month ago.

"This is the most critical issue: We have to reverse this trend before our hospitals become overwhelmed.

"We really need to reverse the trend before our essential workers, including nurses and doctors, fall ill and can no longer serve our community. Thank you Clint Wallace for your service, and your really impactful words this morning.

"Every generation has faced sacrifices. This is our moment. But of course this sacrifice is not evenly shared.

"It is difficult to imagine, but only members of our household will be able to gather at the Thanksgiving table this year. The relatives and friends we usually see at the holidays will be with us only by phone and video.

"But this sacrifice, as personal as it feels, is minor compared to what many restaurateurs, retailers, and other businesses, and their workers, face. We owe them our patronage, and we owe them financial assistance. We owe it to ourselves to preserve the jobs, and the businesses that make our communities what they are. And I am glad to hear about the additional aid that the Governor has just announced.

"The Governor's announcement this morning is the right thing to do under the dire circumstances we now face.

"I appreciate that for many local businesses, this means continued hardships, and for many residents, not only financial strain, but continued isolation.

"But these steps do appear right now to be necessary to bring this virus under control, and the more we do this together – the more we can take aggressive and collective action – the faster we can return to normalcy.

"Beyond the restrictions and the aid announced by the Governor, King County is taking actions including:

- hiring and onboarding 25 additional contact tracers to add to our core group of 70;
- already added four new test sites in south King County, where the incidence rate of coronavirus is twice that of King County as a whole, and we are pushing forward in adding even more test sites.
- launching a pilot to provide basic supports to lowest income residents who must isolate or quarantine because of coronavirus, but that may not be a viable option for them financially. We want to make sure they don't have to go into work and risk infecting others.

"But that's all paid for from COVID funds, and we locally are out of COVID funds.

"We need new federal resources for wage replacement or paycheck protection, for rental assistance, food security, childcare, behavioral health supports, and of course for public health funding.

"This pandemic will not last forever. There is good news on the horizon with vaccines. And I want to point out that people are really doing a good job following the public health guidance. People in Washington state, people in King County, are being conscientious - 93% of Washingtonians wearing masks in the appropriate circumstances. Despite the darkness of this winter, we have every reason to be optimistic that a brighter, sunnier day is ahead.

"But until that day, we have to act - individually and collectively - to save lives, to save health - physical health and mental health. To save businesses and the cultural institutions that make our communities great places to live, and simply to take care of one another, and take care of this place we love.

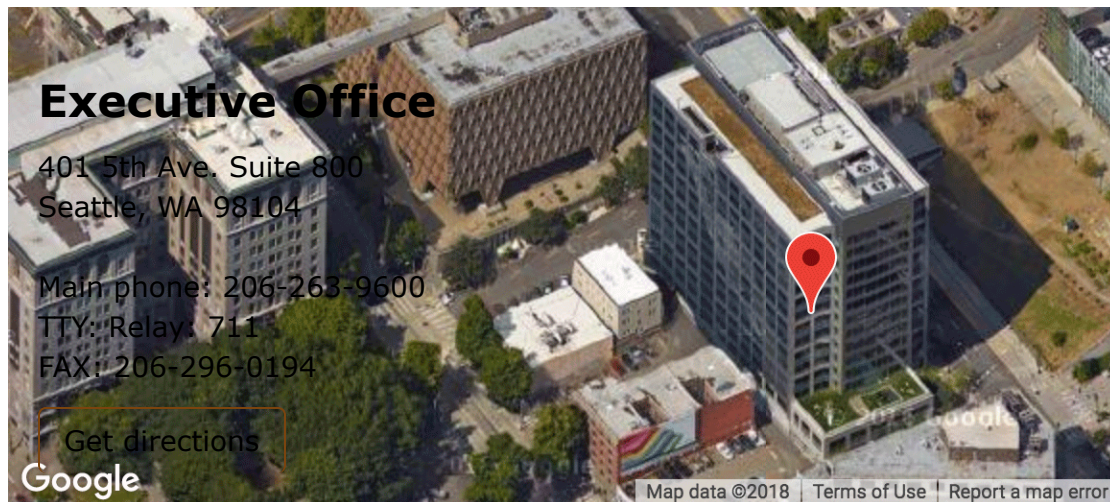
"So let's all take the necessary steps, all the steps that we can, to keep every person safe, to ensure that every person is able to get through to the other side."

- [King County - Current Guidance](#)
- [Governor's Nov. 15 Announcement](#)
- [King County COVID Response](#)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

[Chase Gallagher](#), Executive Office, 206-263-8537

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[Read the Executive's biography](#)

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