

DHW CONNECTION

A newsletter for the employees of the Idaho Department of Health & Welfare

DOING OUR PART



Above: Elke Shaw-Tulloch demonstrates how to wear a face mask during her Facebook Live broadcast, and encourages businesses and customers to do their part to help slow the spread of COVID-19.



Volume

23

June 26, 2020

DHW VOICE BLOG POST

Businesses are uniquely challenged in this pandemic, but they can help slow the spread of COVID-19

ONE IDAHO

Have you signed the pledge? We are all part of the solution. Do your part to help keep the places we work and enjoy safe

ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS

DHW Bureau of Long Term Care staff dress in purple to help promote World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

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Below: Elke Shaw-Tulloch demonstrates to Facebook Live viewers how to wear a face mask to protect others and yourself from COVID-19.



DHW CONNECTION

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On Tuesday, June 25, Gov. Brad Little announced that Idaho did not meet the metrics needed to move out of the final stage of the Idaho Rebounds plan. Idaho will stay in the final stage of the Idaho Rebounds plan for at least another two weeks.

He also announced that the state's COVID-19 response will transition to a more regional approach as the number of cases in some counties has increased significantly, while several others have had no confirmed cases. DHW and the Governor's Office will continue to work closely with the local public health districts to collectively ensure the health and safety of Idahoans.

Idaho did not meet the epidemiologic and healthcare criteria to advance past Stage 4:

- The number of reported cases from June 10-25 trended upward instead of downward,
- The percent of positive tests from June 8-21 trended upward instead of downward.
- The average percent positive for the prior 14-day period was greater than 5-percent at 5.12-percent.
- The number of healthcare workers reported with COVID-19 from June 10-23 trended upward, and the average number of healthcare workers reported having COVID-19 per day was greater than the standard of 2.

What this all means is that it remains critical for everyone to follow the recommended guidelines and stay home if you're sick, wear a face covering and keep six feet apart in public and wash your hands frequently. It's also a good idea to avoid large gatherings of people to help reduce your personal risk of getting COVID-19.

In addition, you may be wondering if pausing in stage 4 affects the our department plans for how you work. The short answer is no. If you are currently teleworking or if you are currently coming into a department location, you should continue to do so.

Our Division of Public Health, under the leadership of Elke Shaw-Tulloch, have established [specific epidemiologic, syndromic, and healthcare criteria](#) for Idaho to meet we advance through the Idaho Rebounds plan and [staged reopening](#).

The protocols and guidance for the four stages to re-opening Idaho are subject to change. Dates of subsequent stages are also subject to change if criteria are not met. Details are available at <https://rebound.idaho.gov/>.

During all stages, all Idahoans should continue to:

- Engage in physical distancing of at least 6 feet
- Wear face coverings in public places
- Stay home if sick
- Practice good hand hygiene
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Disinfect surfaces and objects regularly

Idaho is focused on expanding and targeting access to testing, enhancing contact tracing for all COVID-19 cases, and working to ensure healthcare system capacity. In addition, Idaho continues to hone plans and strategies for preparedness and protecting residents of long-term care facilities from COVID-19.

Sara Alert tracing software

To accomplish an expected increased volume of work as more waves of COVID-19 occur, local public health agencies will use data tools to help manage the workload. A system called Sara Alert has been selected as a tool to help organize the contact tracing process, including monitoring, in Idaho. Sara Alert is a secure software tool, which people being monitored for illness can access to report symptoms (or lack thereof) for the period of monitoring, up to 14 days.

Sara Alert does not:

- Track patient movements.
- Use involuntary processes (such as turning on locating information on the patient's phone).
- Does not retain information about contacts after the monitoring period (up to 14 days) ends.

We encourage people to participate if they are contacted by a contact tracer so disease transmission can be monitored and stopped. If people choose to not participate, it will be more difficult to keep people healthy in the middle of a pandemic.

Long-term care facilities

Data from long-term care facilities with cases and deaths from COVID-19 is published weekly at <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/ltc/>. Similar data is also being posted by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) at <https://data.cms.gov/stories/s/bkwz-xpvg>

Specimens from residents of long-term care facilities who have symptoms compatible with COVID-19 have always been considered high priority for testing at the Idaho Bureau of Laboratories. The local public health districts have worked closely with long-term care facilities to secure testing of symptomatic residents through the Idaho Bureau of Laboratories. IBL is also accepting specimens from new resident admissions, symptomatic staff, and all staff (whether or not they are symptomatic) when there is one or more newly-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a facility. See https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/052720_IBL-Testing-Update-for-LTCFs-FINAL.pdf for detail.

Early in the pandemic, there was a limited supply of testing swabs and other supplies needed to collect the specimens, so local public health districts may not have been able to provide test kits for every long-term care facility resident who was symptomatic. In that case, facilities and medical providers would have had to pursue testing through other means, such as through clinical or commercial labs. IBL is now receiving regular shipments of swabs and viral transport media from the federal government and distributing these supplies to the public health districts. Long-term care facilities can contact their local public health district if they need testing supplies.

Long-term care facilities have received guidance on how to respond to even a single positive resident, so proper protection is used for all residents, even if testing is not universally done. Guidance is available at <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/ltc/>. There are now more testing options available, and the long-term care facility strike team has developed a testing strategy document that can be found here: https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/LTCF-Testing-Strategy-FINAL-2020_6_3.pdf.

Keep yourself informed with reliable, accurate information: COVID-19 Data Dashboard

As of June 25, there have been 4,865 confirmed cases of COVID-19, and 90 deaths in Idaho. You can find updates on confirmed cases on coronavirus.idaho.gov. These numbers are updated daily.

Community spread has been announced in 26 Idaho counties: Ada, Bannock, Benewah, Bingham, Bonner, Bonneville, Blaine, Canyon, Caribou, Cassia, Elmore, Gem, Gooding, Jefferson, Jerome, Kootenai, Lemhi, Lincoln, Madison, Minidoka, Owyhee, Payette, Power, Teton, Twin Falls, and Washington counties. That means it is more important than ever for people in those areas to assume the virus that causes COVID-19 is already circulating in those communities and to take the recommended precautions.

COVID-19 data on the dashboard at <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/> is changing frequently in an effort to provide more information as sufficient data are received to display while protecting the privacy of Idahoans. Please check the website regularly – data will be updated at the dates and time listed in the footnotes. State-level data is updated by 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Health district data will be updated on their websites at their discretion. For more information about why local public health districts may be announcing cases not counted on the state site: <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/127/2020/03/CaseCountDifferences.pdf>

The data DHW provides on the dashboard comes from the seven local health districts. They provide data on COVID-19 cases to the state through a confidential, computerized system that is updated as they work through epidemiological investigations. Data often changes based on what is discovered throughout an investigation. Some of the data on the dashboard is updated daily, and some is updated weekly, and that is noted in the footnotes on each page.

All of the data provided on the dashboard is accurate – sometimes (often) it can be incomplete depending on the status of the epi investigations and how often the health districts are able to update the records. We have a team that goes through the data every day to download it, clean it up (we get lots of duplicate records) and upload it to the dashboard. All data provided in real-time should be considered preliminary.

BUSINESSES ARE UNIQUELY CHALLENGED IN THIS PANDEMIC, BUT THEY CAN HELP SLOW THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

This article originally appeared in the [DHW Voice blog](#) on June 23, 2020.

By Elke Shaw-Tulloch, administrator of the Division of Public Health and Idaho public health officer

Trying to operate any business in Idaho in this time of COVID-19 is a challenge. The number of COVID-19 cases are increasing, face coverings are divisive, staying on top of cleaning is difficult, staffing is an issue, and some people aren't following the guidelines recommended by public health officials, potentially causing the numbers to rise even higher.

Operating a bar in this environment is even more difficult. Customers are drinking alcohol, which dulls the ability to make good decisions, and the bars are packed with people who are tired of staying home. That is risky behavior in a pandemic; and the evidence bears that out as we saw with a cluster of cases that started in bars in downtown Boise two weeks ago and grew in the locations and types of businesses impacted.

While Ada County has now moved back to Stage 3 from the Idaho Rebounds plan and bars have been ordered to close, it is an opportunity to learn about the devastating impact COVID-19 can have if businesses and people are not socially responsible and creating environments where people can stay healthy and businesses can stay open.

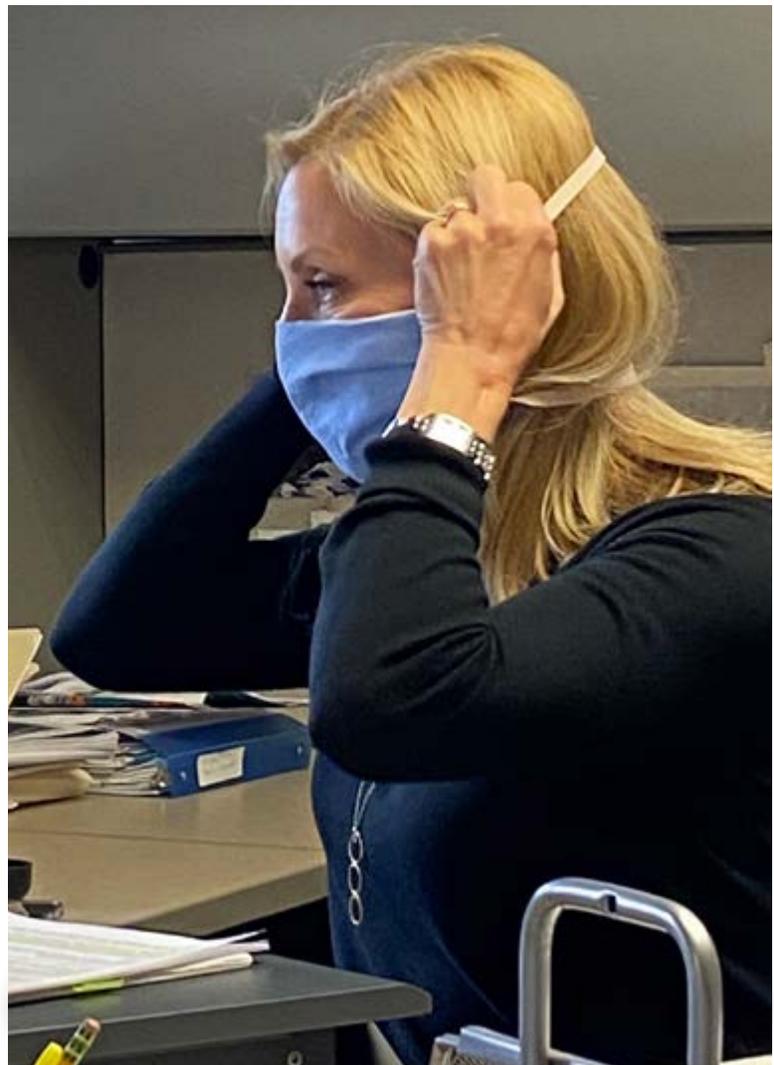
The following is a list of actions that businesses and patrons can take to help keep the doors open:

- Staff consistently wear face coverings.
- Customers wear face coverings.
- Physical distancing and occupancy restrictions are in place and practiced.
- Public health and business owners educate the public on responsible socializing while COVID-19 is circulating.
- Local public health districts can assist establishments in an on-site technical review of operational plans for increased safety and sanitation.
- Customers can let businesses know they appreciate being kept safe and visit establishments that provide for that safety.

These are great examples of how businesses should protect their customers by making it easier for them to adhere to the guidelines by having their employees adhere to them, and how they can do their part to keep Idaho open during this pandemic by reducing the risk of getting infected with COVID-19 in their establishments.

Customers can show their respect for the businesses by adhering to their protocols and guidelines, and they can show respect for their fellow Idahoans by following public health advice.

We can and should all be doing our part to reduce the risk and help keep Idaho open, by wearing cloth face coverings in public, keeping 6 feet apart in public, staying home if you're sick, and washing or sanitizing your hands frequently. And we might all be more inclined to do that if our favorite local businesses provide a safer place to shop or have a drink with a friend (6 feet apart) because they are following the protocols as well.



Elke Shaw-Tulloch, administrator of the Division of Public Health, demonstrates how to secure and wear a face mask during her Facebook Live broadcast on June 17.



Recently, we've received a number of Ask the Big Boss questions about the safety protocols in place as some DHW office re-open their doors to customers and some DHW staff members return to their office places. The guidance issued to staff is intended to address these questions and concerns. For specific guidance on individual work spaces, please reach out to your supervisor or HR representative.

GUIDANCE FOR RETURNING TO OFFICE SPACES

Highlights from the [21-page workplace health, safety, and phase-in plan](#):

- Stay home when sick.
- Employees are expected to wear a cloth face covering in public areas when other physical safeguards (such as six feet of physical distance or plexiglass barriers) are difficult to maintain.
- Customers are not required to wear a cloth face covering when seeking DHW services.
- Employees are expected to maintain six feet of physical distance from others, when possible. For some jobs, such as at SHS, SHN, and SWITC, this is not possible. Similarly, if other physical protective measures are in place, such as plexiglass barriers, six feet of distance is not required.
- Janitorial services have been expanded to comply with CDC guidance. But that doesn't mean we now have non-stop janitorial services from 8-5 following us around cleaning everything we touch. Therefore, employees need to help clean communal spaces and their own workstations frequently. And, employees need to clean their own equipment before allowing someone else to use it.
- Food – whether at a meeting or hosting a lunch time potluck – is okay. However, six feet of physical distance must be maintained and additional precautions may need to be implemented. For meetings, consider adjusting food and drink options to minimize the potential of sharing germs.

HAVE YOU SIGNED THE ONE IDAHO PLEDGE?

On June 9, Gov. Brad Little announced ONE Idaho, a statewide initiative to highlight the resilience and adaptability of Idaho businesses, employees, and consumers as the state moves through stages of reopening and rebounding.

Details about the ONE Idaho initiative can be found at <https://ONE.idaho.gov/>.

You can show your support for an open, safe and healthy state by taking the ONE Idaho Pledge, committing to do your part as an employee (or consumer). The pledge is as follows:

"I pledge to help keep Idaho's economy open and protect lives.

I pledge to stay home if I am sick.

I pledge to wear a cloth face covering in public places, if appropriate.

I pledge to wash my hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and water or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

I pledge to maintain at least six feet distance from others when possible.

I pledge to follow the protocols established by businesses I frequent."

On its social media channels, ONE Idaho will showcase the business innovations and community initiatives that have emerged as Idahoans do things differently for the greater good.

ONE

Take the

ONE Idaho Pledge

We are all part of the solution. Do your part to keep the places we work and enjoy safe.

Find out more at

one.idaho.gov

ONE

AN ADOPTION SUCCESS STORY

In his message to DHW staff on June 23, Director Dave Jeppesen shared the following story about a successful adoption that was made possible by determined DHW staff members.

“I’d like to highlight a success story that brought a tear of joy to my eye recently. I had the pleasure of signing the adoption for a child who had initially been brought to Idaho for an international adoption. The reason this one sticks in my heart is that she had previously been adopted by a couple who decided not to keep her and who had abandoned her at a hospital with some significant health issues. I always feel so bad for the kiddos who have broken adoptions.

After much hard work from the foster family and our team in Family and Community Services to track the initial adoption, find and fill out lots of paperwork, and generally do some pretty incredible detective work, this child has been adopted by a family in Idaho, and she is finally where she is supposed to be. I wish I could share more details of what happened to get this child into her permanent home, but to do so would violate their privacy. But what a great ending to this story. I’m very proud of the team that helped make this happen, led by Mariah Martindale. Good work!

Thanks to all of you for the great work that you do every day to help the people of Idaho live their best life possible. Your efforts make a difference. Stay safe and stay healthy.”



Census day was April 1, 2020, but if you haven’t completed your census, it’s not too late! The last day to complete the census is Oct. 31, 2020. Please complete your census today. You can find a list of [important census dates](#) on the census website.

Lost your census ID number? No problem! On the [census log in page](#), simply scroll down under the “log in” and you can access the questionnaire. Completing the census should take between 5 and 10 minutes. It is easy and safe to complete, and is very important for the work that the department does.

Data collected in the census will inform the distribution of more than \$675 billion in federal funds to states and communities each year for things like infrastructure, healthcare, and food assistance. It’s important that we all respond to shape the future of our communities. Learn more at [2020CENSUS.GOV](#).

BUREAU OF LONG TERM CARE STAFF DRESS IN PURPLE FOR WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

LET'S END ABUSE
AND NEGLECT
TOGETHER.



DON'T IGNORE IT.
REPORT IT.

877-799-4430

<https://medicaidcomplaints.dhw.idaho.gov>



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE

On June 15th, Bureau of Long Term Care staff helped to raise awareness for elder abuse by dressing in purple. World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) was launched by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations. The purpose of WEAAD is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect.



Bureau of Long Term Care staff get creative and found new ways to wear purple - virtually!

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BUREAU OF LONG TERM CARE STAFF DRESS IN PURPLE FOR WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

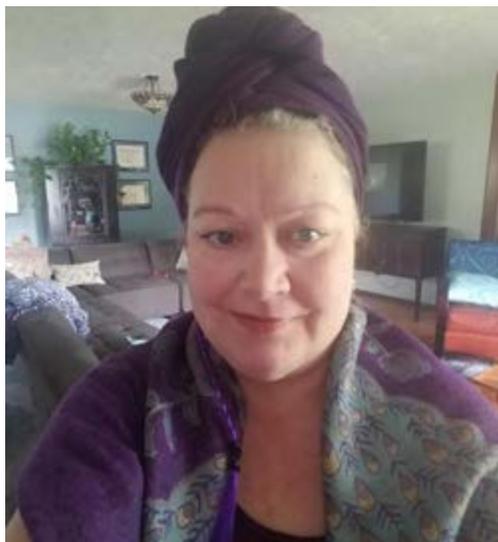


What does abuse look like?

- Have you noticed that your grandparent or elderly neighbor does not seem themselves lately?
- Do you see them flinch when you go near them and/or they have unexplained bruises?
- Do you know the last time someone checked up on them?



The person you are thinking of could be a victim of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

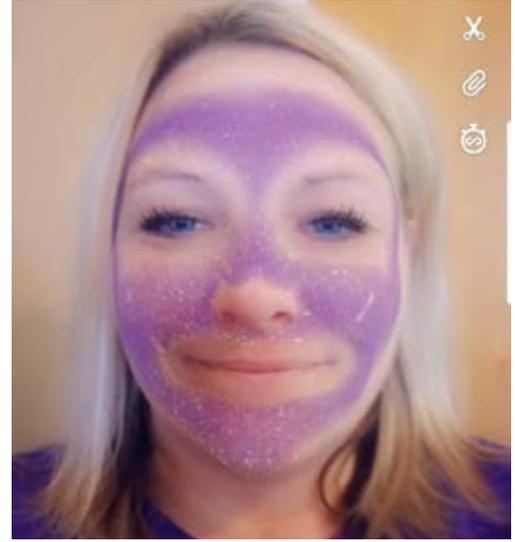


Purple hair was popular among Bureau of Long Term Care staff, as they dressed and accessorized in purple to help raise awareness for elder abuse.



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BUREAU OF LONG TERM CARE STAFF DRESS IN PURPLE FOR WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY



More purple hair from Bureau of Long Term Care staff... and to keep current with the times, a purple face mask, too!



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BUREAU OF LONG TERM CARE STAFF DRESS IN PURPLE FOR WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY



Bureau of Long Term Care staff join together (from home) to share their purple accessories and help raise awareness for elder abuse.





Bureau of Facility Standards

The Bureau Bureau of Facility Standards administers three programs:

- Long-Term Care
- Non-Long-Term Care
- Facility Fire Safety and Construction

The Long-Term Care Program conducts licensing and certification activities to ensure that the state's 81 long-term care facilities, which have 6,193 beds, are following federal regulations and state rules. These facilities cannot receive Medicare or Medicaid payments if they do not comply with regulations.

The Non-Long-Term Care Team is responsible for surveying, licensing, and certifying healthcare providers in the state, including 50 hospitals; 62 home-health agencies with 24 branch locations; 31 end stage renal dialysis centers; 55 hospice agencies with 33 branch locations; 51 ambulatory surgery centers; 62 intermediate care facilities for the intellectually disabled; 49 rural health clinics; seven occupational therapy/physical therapy clinics with 18 extension units; and six portable X-ray providers. These facilities must comply with federal and state regulations to receive Medicare or Medicaid payments.

The Facility Fire Safety and Construction Program provides oversight, training, and management of the facility fire safety and building construction requirements for all federally certified healthcare facilities or state-licensed facilities. This team performs facility plan reviews and approvals; on-site plan inspections and finalizations; consultations; and periodic facility fire and safety surveys, which include complaint and fire investigations.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic brought significant changes to the nature of the work the Bureau of Facility Standards typically does. With the Governor's Stay Healthy Order, which was issued in March, normal survey activity for the bureau, as well as other teams in the Division of Licensing and Certification, was suspended with the exception of investigating complaints alleging immediate danger to residents. Staff quickly shifted from a largely regulatory role to a role of support to the providers they work with. Working closely with the state Coronavirus Long-term Care Strike Team, Debby Ransom and the supervisors and staff in the Bureau of Facility Standards have helped health care providers connect to their local health departments, ensured they received guidance in several areas related to preventing transmission of the virus, and have helped providers solve specific situations in which the facilities were unsure how to proceed during this difficult time.

SERVICE AWARDS NEWSLETTER

HONORING THOSE WHO HAVE REACHED SERVICE MILESTONES

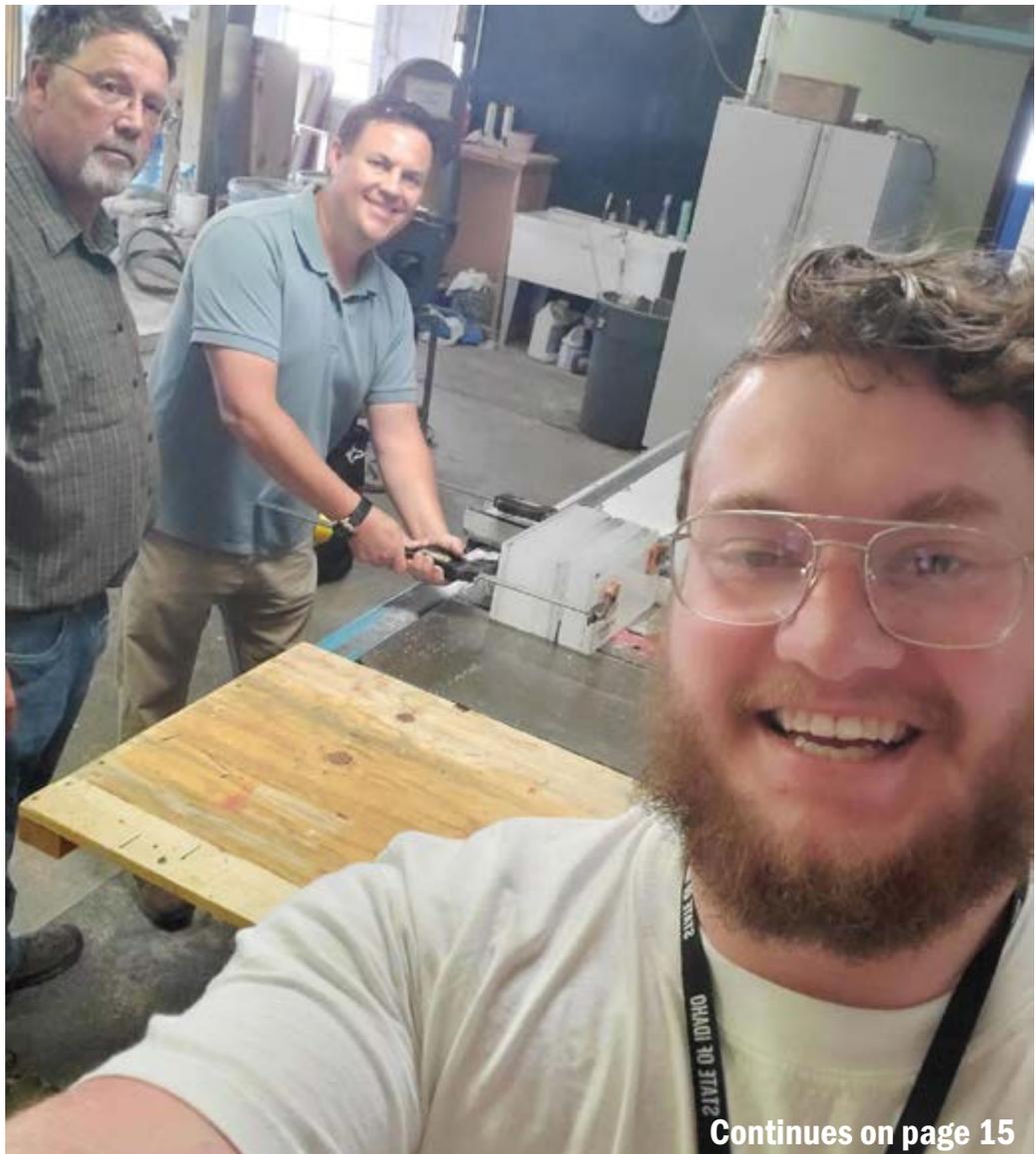
Volume 10, Issue 5 • May 2020



The Service Awards Newsletter features several employees with May anniversaries, including feature **Dori Boyle (25 years)**. **Click here to see more employees who have earned service awards.**

DHW STAFF PREPARE FOR RE-OPENING SOME DHW OFFICE LOCATIONS

The facilities team visited DHW locations around the state to prepare them for re-opening, including constructing and installing plexiglass in areas where staff will meet with clients and customers. These pictures show some of their handiwork in the Northern Hub. Local staff reported that they were thrilled with the preparations and that it had turned out better than hoped.



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DHW STAFF PREPARE FOR RE-OPENING SOME DHW OFFICE LOCATIONS



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DHW STAFF PREPARE FOR RE-OPENING SOME DHW OFFICE LOCATIONS

J.P. Brady, PPE procurement lead, and Dan Asbury, facilities lead, show off the results of their PPE procurement efforts. J.P., as the lead PPE buyer, works closely with Dan to process PPE intake and keep the PPE supply chain moving smoothly. The facilities team frequently use PPE as they visit locations around the state to ensure their safety, and they are also responsible for providing PPE for DHW staff throughout the department.



The facilities team visited the Eastern Hub to prepare facilities for re-opening offices and lobbies.



DHW KEEPS IDAHOANS UPDATED THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Our social media following growth continues – we now have more than 22,000 followers on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

As of Thursday, June 25, the campaigns featured regularly are focused on the following:

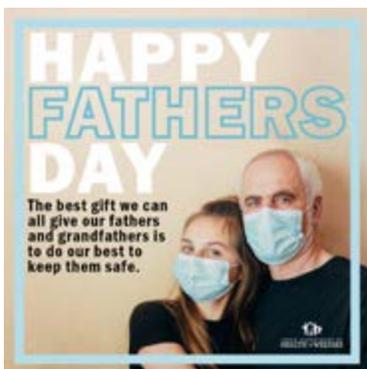
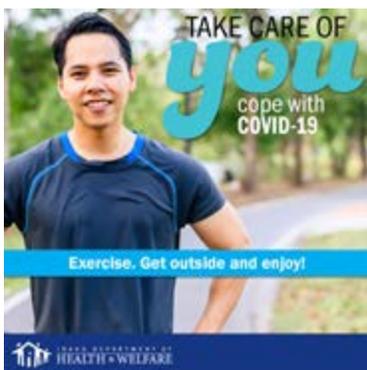
- Contact tracing: how does it work?
- Father’s Day: give the gift of keeping them safe
- Director Dave Jeppesen’s weekly update
- Take care: tips for coping during COVID-19
- Keep doing your part to slow the spread of COVID-19

Facebook Live

The department hosts a Facebook LIVE event every Wednesday at 10 a.m., where our experts answering questions for DHW followers. In the broadcast on Wednesday, June 17, Division of Public Health Administrator Elke Shaw-Tulloch answered questions about slowing the spread of COVID-19 and demonstrated how to wear a face covering. On Wednesday, June 24, Elke answered questions about how businesses and customers can help each other during the pandemic.

DHW Voice

Director Jeppesen prepares an update for Idahoans each Friday to share on DHW Voice blog for the public.



In the news this week: Medicaid expansion, an Idaho flu season alert, a new program launched by Project Filter, and more: In the news this week: Coronavirus testing and data, Gov. Brad Little's four-phase plan for reopening the Idaho economy, and DHW services and news

Coronavirus testing, cases, and contact tracing

We continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation in Idaho very closely. To keep yourself informed about the latest developments relating to COVID-19, and to access trustworthy resources, visit coronavirus.idaho.gov or rebound.idaho.gov. Both websites are updated frequently.

June 24, 2020 Idaho Press

Idaho still thousands of tests per week behind testing task force goals

June 23, 2020 Idaho Statesman

Idaho adds more than 150 coronavirus cases in a single day; deathless streak continues

June 22, 2020 KREM 2 News

As coronavirus cases continue to rise, North Idaho expected to hit 200 by July 4

June 17, 2020 Post Register

COVID-19 case increases in neighboring states spell trouble for Idaho

June 16, 2020 Idaho Press

Worried Idahoans quiz Little about rise in COVID-19 cases

June 13, 2020 East Idaho News

American Red Cross to begin antibody testing on donations

June 13, 2020 Idaho Statesman

Ada County sees largest single-day increase in coronavirus cases in nearly two months

June 10, 2020 Idaho Statesman

Ada County lands on Idaho's new "hot spots" list; homeless person tests positive in Boise

COVID-19 in care facilities

Cases of COVID-19 have been reported by the media as being especially problematic in vulnerable communities, such as in nursing homes.

June 20, 2020 Lewiston Tribune

Outbreak officially over at Lewiston's Life Care Center

June 12, 2020 Boise State Public Radio

Idaho's long-term care centers can open to visitors this weekend under new guidelines

June 10, 2020 KMVT

Idaho Health and Welfare discusses COVID-19 in long-term care facilities

Gov. Brad Little's Stay Healthy Order and plan to re-open the economy

As Idaho has moved from the Stay-Home Order and into the Stay Healthy Order and four-phase plan to re-open the economy, the media has covered our progress and reported on the economic impact.

- June 19, 2020** **Idaho Statesman**
As coronavirus spreads, some neighbor states have paused reopening. Here's why Idaho hasn't
- June 18, 2020** **NPR**
As states reopen, do they have the workforce they need to stop coronavirus outbreaks?
- June 15, 2020** **Idaho Statesman**
Face masks are essential to slowing the coronavirus spread. Here's a guide to help you
- June 11, 2020** **Idaho Statesman**
Idaho Gov. Little moves forward with reopening plan amid COVID-19 pandemic
- June 11, 2020** **Idaho Mountain Express**
Idaho narrowly moves into Stage 4 of reopening
- June 11, 2020** **Boise State Public Radio**
Idaho to enter final phase of reopening Saturday, just barely
- June 11, 2020** **Idaho Statesman**
Bar goes in downtown Boise may have been exposed to coronavirus, health district says
- June 10, 2020** **Post Register**
Officials say religious revival linked to 5 hospitalizations, 35 COVID-19 cases

DHW news and services for Idahoans during COVID-19

While many businesses and services have had to close their doors during the COVID-19 outbreak, the department continues to stay open to serve Idahoans. We have responded to our customers' needs for information and health services, which are especially important today.

- June 23, 2020** **Moscow-Pullman Daily News**
Little calls for ending more than 150 telehealth, other health care rules
- June 22, 2020** **East Idaho News**
2 rabid bats found in Ada County, health officials urge caution around all bats
- June 19, 2020** **Lewiston Tribune**
Idaho Health and Welfare lays off 23 workers
- June 19, 2020** **Lewiston Tribune**
As coronavirus spreads, some neighbor states have paused reopenin
- June 15, 2020** **Idaho State Journal**
Better footing: Pocatello working with Boise consulting group to improve local walkability
- June 13, 2020** **Idaho Press**
Idaho Medicaid expansion numbers continue to rise, now up to 80,000...
- June 11, 2020** **KTVB**
Health and Welfare director: Idaho's suicide rate has declined during pandemic