

Benton-Franklin Health District
www.bfhd.wa.gov

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First Bi-County Youth Death from COVID-19 Reported

Death certificate review concludes youth died from complications of COVID-19

Today, Benton-Franklin Health District is reporting the first death from COVID-19 in an individual in the 10 to 19-year-old range in our counties. The death becomes the third reported in Washington state for a minor and the first in Benton County.

“Every life ending too soon from complications from COVID-19 is tragic,” said Dr. Amy Person, health officer for Benton and Franklin counties. “When that life is a young person, it becomes especially difficult for friends, relatives, and for our community as we acknowledge the serious health issues this novel disease causes,” she continued. “The Health District team sends our deepest condolences to the minor’s family and to each and every person who has been impacted by a death from COVID-19 in our community.”

The minor had underlying health conditions and was not attending school. The death brings the bi-county total to 199 individuals who have passed from COVID-19, with 135 of those deaths occurring in Benton County.

As deaths occur in individuals within Benton and Franklin counties, the coroners determine primary and secondary causes of death which are listed on the death certificate. When death certificates are issued, which can take several weeks, the Health District reviews each one to determine if it is a COVID-19 reportable death. The death is reported as a COVID-19 death if the viral infection is a contributing factor towards the death. It is not counted as a COVID-19 death if the person had the infection when they passed, but it did not contribute to the death.

“Serious complications from COVID-19 in children and young adults still remain very low,” Dr. Person said. “However, it is imperative to continue to treat every case of COVID-19 seriously as it impacts everyone differently,”

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she continued. “Every death reported is an individual whose life was taken too soon. We must not become complacent by letting people become statistics.”

“It is also important to remember our individual actions are contributing factors to how and to whom this virus spreads in our community. We all have an important role to play in not only protecting ourselves, but in protecting everyone that may be affected by our actions,” she said.

Dr. Person urges Benton and Franklin counties’ residents to continue to reduce spread of COVID-19 by staying home when you are sick, wearing a face covering when outside your household, physically distancing from others, washing hands regularly, and protecting our most vulnerable community members. “These measures are instrumental in protecting our community, preserving our health care system, and minimizing lives lost to complications from COVID-19.”

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