



**Inland COVID-19 Response  
Emergency Coordination Center**  
Joint Press Release

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**For Immediate Release**  
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**Spokane Regional Health District submits variance request to move Spokane County to Phase 2**

**Spokane, Wash.** - Today, Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) submitted an application to move Spokane County to Phase 2 of the state's [Safe Start](#) recovery plan. The application was based on Governor Jay Inslee's [new criteria](#) for additional counties to apply for a variance from the Stay Home, Stay Healthy order which would allow more businesses to reopen.

The [variance application](#) included an updated recommendation from Spokane County Health Officer, Dr. Bob Lutz, letters from Spokane County hospital systems confirming bed capacity and a letter of approval from the Spokane County Commissioners. The package has been submitted to the Washington State Department of Health for approval by Washington State Secretary of Health, John Wiesman.

Until the variance is approved, only the businesses allowed to operate during Phase 1 should be open. As new businesses begin to reopen, at each phase of the recovery plan, more people will find it harder to maintain a safe physical distance of 6-feet from others when out in public. SRHD strongly encourages the public to [wear cloth face coverings](#) to maintain the public's health and prevent the spread of COVID-19, a contagious and infectious disease.

More information has become available about how COVID-19 spreads, including the ability for COVID-19-positive individuals who are asymptomatic to spread the virus unknowingly. SRHD asks people to wear cloth face coverings in public to avoid spreading the virus to others, because they may have the virus without knowing it.

"This is an important action the public can take to prevent a second wave of new COVID-19 infections and help businesses remain open during this phased approach to reopen Washington," said Dr. Lutz.

More information about the Safe Start plan and guidance for reopening can be found at: <https://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/covid-19-resources/covid-19-reopening-guidance-businesses-and-workers>.

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