

From: [Malcolm Butler](#)
To: [Hosey, Kristen](#)
Cc: [Barry Kling](#); [Carol McCormick](#)
Subject: RE: Clarification Regarding Today's Meeting
Date: Tuesday, June 02, 2020 5:16:15 PM

Kristen,

Thanks for the question. The answer isn't short.

First we need to discuss the concept of "congregate settings." In a nutshell, these are businesses or residencies where social distancing is not easily achieved, in which there is significant potential for rapid viral transmission. Examples might include: Farmworker housing, airplanes, meat or fruit processing facilities, homeless shelters, jails, etc.

There are three reasons to exclude outbreaks or clusters of COVID-19 in congregate settings from data under review by the State Department of Health as they look at whether Chelan and Douglas Counties can safely reopen their economies:

1. Most of these businesses/facilities are already "open" as they are considered "essential" under the Governor's proclamation. Thus, significant volumes of infections within such congregate facilities should not be considered as we measure the effect of gradually opening the other parts of the economy. We want to be able to measure what impact reopening restaurants has, so let's make sure we focus on people who have been in restaurants as we measure the impact of reopening restaurants. What is happening in the packing sheds is not relevant. (We could discuss how a worker in a packing shed where there is a cluster could pass it to someone in a restaurant which recently reopened, but that is stretching the argument.)
2. The fruit industry cannot help that its design enhances rapid viral transition. I have been working with the fruit industry and have been uniformly impressed at how seriously they are taking this, and the steps they have taken to protect their workers (sometimes more than I am seeing in healthcare). The fruit industry doesn't want to be "blamed" for the economy of Chelan and Douglas counties wasting away because the outbreaks in their facilities spread rapidly and generate large numbers of new cases quickly. Somehow there is a word on the street that "the vast majority of cases are coming from the fruit industry." That comment is NOT supported by the data we have at the Health district. Our contact tracing suggests that around 25% of cases have come from clusters in congregate settings. Yet somehow we all hear the lament of "how are we ever going to reopen the economy when the migrant farmworkers are all getting infected?" One reason to separate out cases from clusters in congregate settings is to avoid the transmission of such fallacious comments.
3. Finally, it isn't Chelan County's fault that there are a whole lot of migrant farmworkers entering congregate housing facilities right now. We need them to get in the harvest so that we can feed people and fuel the economy. How is it fair to compare Chelan county's infection rate to San Juan county's? One way to make it more fair is to exclude the impact of such congregate housing facilities from data used to compare counties to each other.

To be clear, I am NOT proposing to ignore what is happening in congregate facilities. Quite the

contrary. We have special strike teams ready to deploy to test all workers on a packing line, or all residents in a nursing home, or all farmworkers in a housing facility. Congregate settings get extra scrutiny. Orders are in place that specify how beds are to be arranged in farmworker housing, how meals are to be served in long term care facilities, how farmworkers are to be bussed to the fields, how shields should be used between workers on a packing line.

I know that people worry that if we turn our eyes away from the fruit industry, or farmworker housing, that people may take advantage of that. I want to reassure you that at CVCH we very much have our finger on that pulse, since we ask our patients about their work settings daily. As a champion of the rights of the Hispanic community for my entire career, I will never let that happen.

Malcolm Butler

CVCH Chief Medical Officer

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Locations in Wenatchee, East Wenatchee & Chelan.

From: Hosey, Kristen <khosey@wvc.edu>

Sent: Monday, June 1, 2020 8:11 PM

To: Malcolm Butler <mbutler@cvch.org>

Cc: Barry Kling (barry.kling@cdhd.wa.gov) <barry.kling@cdhd.wa.gov>; Carol McCormick <Carol.McCormick@cdhd.wa.gov>

Subject: Clarification Regarding Today's Meeting

Hello Malcom Butler, and team,

I was unable to attend the 3pm meeting today, but I was asked a question by some colleagues of mine that did attend that I was hoping I could get clarification on on their behalf.

I was asked about a proviso in the reopening plan that was mentioned around congregate places like agricultural housing being analyzed separately from the general community to protect industry. I get the impression that this comment has some Latinx community leaders worried that this could increase the health disparities of this group.

I was asked to provide some thoughts on this but I was not on the call today so wanted to see if you had some clarification I could pass along?

Thanks in advance, and have a good evening.

Kristen N. Hosey, DNP, RN, PHNA-BC

Nursing Programs Director

Pronouns: she, her, hers

Wenatchee Valley College

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