

# From the Desk: Public Health Talk

## with Anthony Maldonado, MPH

Hello all,

First, I want to start by taking a moment to recognize it is Black History month and recognize all our African American friends, families, and community members. I see you; I respect you; I appreciate each and every one of you. If you are interested in reading more about Black History month including its origins and theme for the 2024 year you can [learn more here](#).

The Legislative session is moving very quickly! There is only about one month left of this legislative session and cut off dates are approaching fast. I had the opportunity to go to Olympia and advocate for increasing naloxone within the school districts as well as for other important public health policies being heard. If you have not yet, listen to [Public Health is Essential by Megan Moore](#) to learn more.

Additionally, Naloxone distribution per the Department of Health program has began. All public schools in the ESD 105 region will have access to 2 naloxone kits (4 doses) of naloxone to have in their High Schools. We are working to have the naloxone distributed as soon as possible. This program will replenish any used, lost, or expiring kits until supplies last.

Lastly, this feels like the longest respiratory season we have had in awhile. If you are feeling the same it is because it is longer than the previous years. "Typical" respiratory illness before the beginning of the pandemic (pre-pandemic) was about 15-18 weeks. The past two years we saw only 7 weeks and 11 weeks of respiratory illness mostly due to mitigation measures being implemented which shortened the burden of disease and the respiratory season. We are currently in the 13th week of being in respiratory season but are seeing a decrease in illness. [Illness levels are still high but are starting to decrease](#).

Overall, [Covid viral wastewater data shows a decrease nationally](#) and the "West" is lower than the national average. Viral wastewater data is a good indicator of disease prevalence since we know testing rates have decreased. Covid-19 overall is higher than the flu for hospital rates. [For ages 0-15](#), influenza is surging and for [ages 0-4](#) is starting to decrease but the burden of disease for this age group is still significant. We are now seeing an [increase in Norovirus](#). This is the time when this particular illness begins to increase. Good hand hygiene is always important but even more critical for mitigating the spread of Norovirus.

If you are interested in subscribing this monthly newsletter please fill out [this google form](#); Additionally, feel free to provide any anonymous feedback you have or would like to [share here](#). I look forward to our talk next month.

Cheers,  
Anthony Maldonado, MPH