



# PUYALLUP TRIBE OF INDIANS



## Important Announcement: Please Read

From Puyallup Tribal Council

March 17, 2020

txʷəl gʷəlapu, gʷəlapu siʔiʔab dʔiišəd, dsyayəʔ. To all of you, our honorable people and relatives,

Our Tribal Community has been through a lot in these past weeks. A year ago, no one had heard of COVID-19. Today this virus has brought much of daily life to a standstill. Our schools are closed, our Elders luncheons are canceled, and people are told to keep their distance from each other. And for the first time in history, Emerald Queen Casino will go dark for an extended period of time.

We are in uncertain times: Puyallup – of all people – having to keep “social distancing” from each other to protect public health. How strange it is for us to experience months without school, prayer circles, cultural classes and parades. People are worried – scared, even. We understand. We look at places like Italy and China and wonder what the future has in store. But we as a Council can say this with certainty:

ʔa čəʔ txʷəl gʷəlapu. We are here for you all.

We are committed to providing essential government services to you. However, please understand that for safety we need to limit access our buildings and that staff will be on call. Please see below for details:

If you have questions, please call the service departments you work with as usual. The situation has changed daily, even hourly, but as this letter goes out we can assure you that we are working diligently with our staff to protect our members and our communities. Here are some of the things we are doing:

- ☐ **We are protecting our Elders.** The House of Respect Residence has placed restrictions on who can visit Elders. Until April 2, there will be no visitors entering the community. Elders luncheons are canceled for safety. The House of Respect community lunch program will continue by providing take-out sack lunches until April 2. Family members are welcome to leave care packages for their loved ones at the front desk. In addition, staff members can help residents Facetime and use other video-conferencing programs to connect with their family members. Questions? Please contact Russ Hanscom, RN, MHA at (253) 302-9523.
- ☐ **We are protecting our youth.** We have closed Chief Leschi Schools and Grandview Early Learning Center **effective Monday, March 16**. As of now, we plan for both to reopen in late April – but again, the situation is fluid. The Little Wild Wolves Youth Center has also temporarily been closed with the exception of funerals.
- ☐ **We are protecting our tribal members, employees and visitors.** We closed both Emerald Queen Casino locations and scaled back to essential government operations for two weeks beginning at midnight on Monday, March 16. Tribal government and casino staff will reassess conditions toward the end of the two-week period and determine how to proceed. Most tribal buildings will not be open to the public, and whenever possible, the expectation is for staff to continue



serving their clients to the best of their ability while working from home. Contact the service department you work with if you have questions. You can find a list of service departments on the Tribe's website: [PuyallupTribe-nsn.gov](http://PuyallupTribe-nsn.gov).

- ☐ **We are giving our employees peace of mind.** Job worries often follow health and safety. Employees will not experience a disruption in wages or benefits during the two-week period. We as a Council also have changed administrative leave rules to make it very easy for our employees who face day-care issues, are sick, or are caring for loved ones who are sick to take paid leave. Others are being shown how they can work from home, or fill in for those who are absent. If you have questions, please call Tribal Administration's Human Resources office at (253) 573-7863, or the entity you work for.
- ☐ **We are protecting our community members.** Tribal Administration has canceled gatherings through the end of the month and into April, including prayer circles, cultural activities and community dinners.
- ☐ **We are helping take care of the broader community.** We have offered the Emerald Queen Riverboat and its adjacent 45 acres on Alexander Avenue to public health authorities as a possible isolation site or command center if needed.

Any of these measures could change between the time we sent this letter and the time you read it. That's how fluid the situation is.

**Make sure you're getting the right medical information.** As a Council, we have been in constant contact with Puyallup Tribal Health Authority and Dr. Alan Shelton, who is in daily communication with Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department. You can reach PTHA at (253) 593-0232. Get updates on the virus from TPCHD at [TPCHD.org/healthy-people/human-coronavirus](http://TPCHD.org/healthy-people/human-coronavirus).

Please be patient as we work through the daily challenges produced by the coronavirus outbreak. Stay up to date through the Tribe's website ([PuyallupTribe-nsn.gov](http://PuyallupTribe-nsn.gov)), and its official social media pages. When the casinos reopen, we will shift operations from the current I-5 location to the new \$450 million I-5 casino we've all been waiting for. We'll have something special planned for our Tribal members.

Be kind – ʔububʔub. Be helpful – kʷaxʷalikʷ. We've faced adversity before, and together we've faced it head-on and persevered. Now is another one of those times where we need to come together and take care of one another. Remember that – ʔaswələxʷ čəʔ – we are strong, resilient people. We will get through this difficult time together.

Take care of yourselves. tiix̣dubut čələp. Watch over yourselves well. haʔʔ kʷ(i) adsəslabcəbut.

Sincerely,



David Z. Bean  
Chairman  
On behalf of Puyallup Tribal Council