

Inslee orders all bars, restaurants to close to fight virus

By RACHEL LA CORTE
Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Washington Gov. Jay Inslee on Monday said he will order the temporary state-wide closure of all bars, restaurants, gyms and other facilities to fight the spread of COVID-19.

Inslee said the ban, to be issued via emergency proclamation, wouldn't apply to grocery stores and pharmacies, and that restaurants could continue take-out and delivery services.

The restrictions will last until at least March 31, but could be expanded. The governor also revised his ban on events to prohibit gatherings of 50 or more people. Previously, the size limit was more than 250.

"These are very difficult decisions, but hours count here and very strong measures are necessary to slow the spread of the disease. I know there will be significant economic impacts to all our communities and we are looking at steps to help address those challenges," Inslee said.

Other governors have instituted such measures. California Gov. Gavin Newsom on Sunday called for all bars, wineries, nightclubs and brewpubs to close in the nation's most popu-



AP Photo/Ted S. Warren

Customers sit in a dining area of Cafe Cosmos in downtown Seattle on Sunday. Washington Gov. Jay Inslee said Sunday night that he would order all bars, restaurants, entertainment and recreation facilities in the state to temporarily close to fight the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. Inslee said restaurants could continue take-out and delivery services.

lous state. The governors of Ohio, Massachusetts and Illinois also ordered bars and restaurants to shutter.

Public health officials in the Seattle area reported two more COVID-19 deaths, bringing the total statewide to at least 42.

King County Executive

Dow Constantine issued a statement Sunday night: "We are at a critical moment in this crisis," he said. "It is time, right now, for people to assume that they and everyone they meet is infected, to avoid any unnecessary interactions that might lead to further infection, and

to wait and monitor to see if they have in fact been infected so that they can isolate and recover without presenting a risk to others. Go to work if you must. But hunker down if you are able."

Both additional deaths announced Sunday were

residents of the Life Care Center of Kirkland, the suburban nursing home that has been the center of the outbreak in the hard-hit region. They were a woman in her 60s, who died Saturday, and a woman in her 70s, who died Thursday.

That makes 29 coronavi-

rus-related fatalities linked to the nursing home. There are more than 750 confirmed cases statewide. The Washington Department of Health says that 8% of the more than 9,400 people who have been screened for COVID-19 tested positive.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover.

Tyler Baldwin, a bartender at the Taproom in Pike Place Market in Seattle, was mopping up Sunday night after Inslee's announcement about the pending closure of bars and restaurants.

Baldwin, 29, said the closure would be hard.

"Basically, close down early so I can go home and start figuring out unemployment, food stamps, really whatever the next step to keep myself afloat is," he said.

Baldwin said there had been fewer and fewer customers in his bar the past few weeks, which is located in one of Seattle's biggest tourist attractions.

"It's shocking, in a way.

Forecast for Pendleton Area

