Hi Maxford,

I apologize for the late reply on this. In our confirmed death count, the data includes anyone who has tested positive and has COVID, or something related, listed on their death certificate. Those other related listings include not only other spellings or options of listing of COVID as was mentioned in the email below (sars-COV-2, coronavirus 19, etc.), but also illnesses such as acute respiratory distress syndrome and pneumonia. These 'other' causes are more common early in the outbreak when there was not clear guidance given to providers on certifying COVID deaths. Since mid-March, certifying correctly has improved greatly and we rarely need to include these 'other' causes.

Thanks again for your patience-
Sharon

From: Maxford Nelsen <MNelsen@freedomfoundation.com>
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2020 12:00 PM
To: Public Health Public Information Officer <PHPIO@kingcounty.gov>
Subject: RE: Counting COVID-19 deaths

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Mr. Williams,

Thank you for the response. Just one final question. Can you clarify for me a bit further what you mean when you state that the county counts a death if the death certificate "specifies COVID *or similar illness*"?

Does that just mean that the county includes death certificates with varying naming conventions for the virus (i.e., "COVID," "COVID-19," "coronavirus," "SARS-CoV-2," etc.)? Or do you mean that the county includes in its count death certificates which do not specifically mention the virus in some way but may reflect symptoms/causes that appear comparable to the virus?

Best,

Maxford Nelsen

Director of Labor Policy | Freedom Foundation
MNelsen@FreedomFoundation.com
360.956.3482 | PO Box 552 Olympia, WA 98507
FreedomFoundation.com

From: Public Health Public Information Officer <PHPIO@kingcounty.gov>

Sent: Friday, June 12, 2020 12:08 PM
To: Maxford Nelsen <MNelsen@freedomfoundation.com>
Subject: RE: Counting COVID-19 deaths

Hi Maxford:

Public Health – Seattle & King County currently counts deaths as "COVID" deaths if the decedent has a positive test result for COVID and the death certificate specifies COVID or similar illness. Public Health currently does not include individuals who had a positive test result but died of non-natural cause (i.e., overdose, homicide, traffic accidents, etc.).

Thanks for your inquiry.

- Doug Williams

From: Maxford Nelsen <MNelsen@freedomfoundation.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2020 1:07 PM
To: Public Health Public Information Officer <PHPIO@kingcounty.gov>
Subject: RE: Counting COVID-19 deaths

Thanks, Kate. No hard deadline, but a response by Monday or Tuesday next week would be much appreciated.

Maxford Nelsen

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From: Public Health Public Information Officer <PHPIO@kingcounty.gov>
Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2020 1:04 PM
To: Maxford Nelsen <MNelsen@freedomfoundation.com>
Subject: Re: Counting COVID-19 deaths

Hi Maxford,

Thanks so much for the nudge -- we somehow missed this email when you sent it Tuesday! Our apologies.

We're looking into this, and may not have an answer til next week. Are you working on a deadline?

Thanks,
Kate

Kate Cole (she/her)
Communications Specialist
Public Health - Seattle & King County

From: Maxford Nelsen <MNelsen@freedomfoundation.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2020 12:57 PM
To: Public Health Public Information Officer <PHPIO@kingcounty.gov>
Subject: RE: Counting COVID-19 deaths

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Just checking in on this. Thanks!

Maxford Nelsen

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From: Maxford Nelsen
Sent: Tuesday, June 9, 2020 1:00 PM
To: phpio@kingcounty.gov
Subject: Counting COVID-19 deaths

King County Public Health Staff,

I have a question regarding King County's method for counting COVID-19 deaths that I hope you can help me with. Specifically, what criteria does the county use when counting a death as related to COVID-19?

I've so far identified two different methods used by various public health agencies in Washington.

The statewide COVID-19 fatality count publicized by the Washington Department of Health includes any person who tested positive for COVID-19 and subsequently died, even if the death certificate made no mention of COVID-19 as playing a role in the death.

However, I know some county health departments only count deaths of persons who tested positive for COVID-19 *and* died for reasons related to the virus. In Thurston County, for instance, "[a]n

individual is counted as a COVID-19 death if they were diagnosed with COVID-19 and died due to health complications related to the illness."

Which method does King County use? Or does it use a different method entirely?

Thanks in advance for your time.

Best,

Maxford Nelsen
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