



News Release

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One year later, millions use Washington state’s exposure notification app

WA Notify users helping to stop the spread of COVID-19

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Health is celebrating a successful year of WA Notify, the state’s exposure notification app. More than 2.62 million people have enabled it— accounting for more than 43 percent of all smartphone users in the state.

With disease transmission still high, it’s important that people continue adopting this key technology.

“WA Notify has been a very successful innovation for our state, and we’re proud of the team at the Department of Health who helped create a tech-based solution that contributed to the greater good as we fought – and continue to fight – this pandemic,” said Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH, Secretary of Health.

[WA Notify](#) protects the privacy of its users while giving them the power to protect their health and the health of their communities, without collecting data about who the users are, where they go, or who they are near. The app uses privacy-preserving technology jointly developed by Google and Apple, with technical assistance and evaluation by the University of Washington. It works in the background and uses only tiny bursts of Bluetooth to avoid impacting your battery – and it’s free.

“If another WA Notify user you’ve been near in the last two weeks later tests positive for COVID-19 and follows the steps to anonymously notify others, you’ll get a notification on your phone that you’ve had a possible exposure,” said Bryant Thomas Karras M.D, Chief Informatics Officer at the Department of Health. “You only receive a notification if there is an exposure. So, no news is good news.”

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Everyone who receives an exposure notification is provided guidance about what to do next based on their vaccination status and whether or not they are experiencing symptoms. This guidance is updated to align with current DOH guidance. Notifications do not contain any information about who tested positive or where the exposure may have happened.

WA Notify can be enabled in iPhone settings (iPhone 5s or newer using iOS 12.5 or higher) or downloaded as an app from the Google Play Store for Android phones. Users can opt out at any time. WA Notify is available in more than 30 languages so as many Washington residents as possible can access this tool.

To increase the value of the app and improve the user experience, the WA Notify team continues to improve and innovate. The most recent enhancements include:

- Adjustments to improve notifications following the emergence of COVID-19 variants
- Improvements to the text messages users receive
- Adding a QR code to easily enable WA Notify and ensure it's still working

“We are so proud of how quickly people in Washington adopted this valuable tool,” said Secretary Shah. “If you haven’t activated WA Notify yet, please consider doing so. It’s one more way to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our community from COVID-19.”

To learn more:

- Visit WANotify.org to see how easy it is to add WA Notify to your smartphone.
- [Watch a video](#) that demonstrates how WA Notify works.

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