

March 18, 2020

Good morning,

As you know, events involving COVID-19 move rapidly. As we receive up-to-the-minute messaging about effects of COVID-19 globally, nationally and locally, it can seem overwhelming. Please know that I, along with Kitsap County Superior Court Administrator Frank Maiocco, have been in regular contact with the Kitsap Public Health District since last week.

Please recognize the distinctions between the various offices in the Kitsap County Courthouse. The Kitsap County Superior Court is separate from the Kitsap County Superior Court Clerk's Office. While we work together on a daily basis, we also respect each other's independence and autonomy. My communications speak for the Kitsap County Superior Court judges and our staff. Not the clerks. This is different than the system in Kitsap County District Court and in other courts.

Yesterday evening shortly after 5:30 p.m. a member of the Kitsap County Superior Court contacted me, indicating they had received a positive test for COVID-19. This individual has not been in the Courthouse since last Thursday, March 12th. As last night's release stated, when they left the Courthouse on Thursday, they were not feeling sick and did not have symptoms of any illness. When they awoke on Friday morning, March 13th, they did. This individual responsibly did not come to the Courthouse and immediately went to their physician. A COVID-19 test was performed. The test result, positive for COVID-19, was received last night. Again, this individual has not been in the Courthouse since last Thursday.

Upon finding out about the test result, I immediately spoke with a nurse designated by the Kitsap County Health District to confirm the advice and recommendations we had previously received. The decision to close our office for the rest of the week was made by Frank and myself in an abundance of caution. We were not directed to do so by the Health District. Also, as of this writing, other than the specific individual who tested positive, there are not any members of the Superior Court Office under quarantine or restrictions other than safe social-distancing and the like.

The Kitsap County Health District immediately began its investigation last night to determine what individuals, both professional and personal, may have had "close-contact" with this person during the relevant time period. The Health District will contact those who do fall within the "close-contact" parameters (please see the attached flyer from the Kitsap Public Health District). Since I don't know at this time who the Health District may deem as a "close-contact" individual, I felt it best to close the Kitsap County Superior Court Office.

I do understand the significant hardship this places on you and your clients. I would much rather be at the office working for you. But at the moment, that is not the best option. Any cases you have scheduled for Superior Court this week will not be heard. District Court, as they always do when needed, has stepped up to handle our arraignment calendars for the rest of the week. Many thanks to Judge Jahns, his benchmates and staff!

We will not be holding our Family Law and Civil / Guardianship meetings this week. My apologies. I am going to reach out to those Team Captains and ask that they consult with their practice area members to get input regarding emergency interim orders.

Our plan is to re-open the Office on Monday. Frank and I will reassess that as the week progresses. Please be mindful and patient when contacting Jennifer Kluver about rescheduling a matter. Upon her return to the office, Jennifer's focus will be on the matters calendared for this week and next.

Yours, Kevin

Kevin Hull

Presiding Judge, Kitsap County Superior Court

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