

A CALL FOR ACTION

Dear Y Members & Friends,

For five and a half months, our fitness facilities have been closed. As an organization that promotes healthy living, we understand the need to take appropriate COVID precautions. We have done exactly that in opening lap swimming and swim lessons under state guidelines. Thank you to those who are participating. It is great to see you again.

We have sought permission from the State Department of Health (DOH) to re-open our fitness operation under the same protocols used in 34 other counties in our state. That approval has not been given. As we look at data and what is happening around the rest of the state, we do not believe this is equitable. You deserve the same opportunity as others in our state to safely exercise in a facility that takes appropriate precautions. The Y deserves the opportunity to re-open to serve you.

Please review the following facts and the data provided. If you agree that you should be allowed to return to the Y, please send a message to DOH or the governor's staff. We believe equal access to good health is something the state should not continue to block.

Facts to consider:

- Indoor fitness is an important element in good physical and mental health.
- In 34 of Washington State's 39 counties, indoor fitness is permitted.
- Those 34 counties are operating under protocols outlined in the Governor's Phase 2 & 3 Indoor Fitness Guidelines. (Among the nation's most restrictive rules)
- If these protocols are safe in 34 counties, they should also be safe in the other five counties. Safe is safe.
- The Yakima and Wenatchee YMCAs and the majority of fitness operators in these five counties are committed to operating under these same protocols.
- DOH uses key metrics in determining a county's readiness to advance from one phase to another.
- Based on those metrics, the five counties left in modified phase 1, meet or exceed the number of metrics met by 25 of the 34 counties currently in Phase 2 or 3. (See Key Metrics graphic)
- Based on the metrics used by DOH, it makes no sense that residents of five counties in Washington are being denied access to this healthy activity.

- Data gathered by the Washington Fitness Alliance indicates there have been a limited number of COVID cases across our country that have been attributed to fitness facilities.
- YMCA's in the state of Oregon have operated since June 1 without any COVID issues.
- There is no data or research that indicates indoor fitness presents a higher risk than other activities allowed under Modified Phase 1.
- DOH has denied requests to allow indoor fitness in counties in modified Phase 1.
- The governor froze the phases, delaying any possibility of the five counties getting to Phase 2.
- Residents of Yakima, Chelan, Douglas, Benton and Franklin Counties are being denied access to better health by DOH and the Governor. They have no research or data to support their position.
- The operators of indoor fitness facilities in these five counties have been closed for five and a half months with no hope of opening in the immediate future. Their long-term sustainability is being threatened.

It is time for the residents of these five counties to make their voices heard. This inequity in access to improved health is not fair or justifiable. Please let these people know why you need access to your fitness facility NOW! Be professional, be courteous and share your story.

Dr. John Wiesman, Secretary DOH secretary@doh.wa.gov

David Postman, Chief of Staff, governor's office

david.postman@gov.wa.gov

Molly Voris, Sr. Policy Advisor, Public Health, governor's office

molly.voris@gov.wa.gov

Feel free to share this information with your friends.

THANK YOU!

Bob Romero

Executive Director

Yakima Family YMCA

From all reported cases, no spread within these clubs has been reported and NO indication that these centers were the source of infection.

There **is no clear evidence** that fitness centers are the cause of further spread.

Contact tracing has shown that the ***fitness industry is not the problem.***