

SPRD: Layoffs should allow people to seek unemployment

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Control and Prevention (CDC). With our activities closed indefinitely, I decided, in consultation with the board of directors, that this is the only viable course of action to ensure the long-term financial stability of the district.

“The decision to lay off almost our entire staff team was one of the most difficult decisions I ever made in my career,” Holland said. “In the seven short months that I have worked at Sisters Park & Recreation District, I can say that staff here are some of the most caring, compassionate and creative people I have ever worked with.”

By officially laying off employees, SPRD hopes to eliminate barriers for individuals to apply for unemployment insurance. SPRD will also be cashing out accrued paid time off for affected employees and reimbursing up to two months of COBRA health insurance premiums.

Program cancellations to date include preschool, youth and adult recreation classes and Sisters Annual Lacrosse Invitational (SALI). All SPRD facilities including the bike park, skate park and disc golf park are closed until April 28. SPRD is prepared to extend or shorten these closures based on direction from the State of Oregon and the CDC.

“We appreciate the community support we have received during this challenging time,” stated Holland. “While we’ve had to extensively reduce our organization, we are committed to resuming operations as soon as possible once the mandates are eased or lifted.”

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TASK FORCE: Goal to bolster state’s ability to provide needed care

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emergency response to COVID-19.

“New projections of COVID-19 cases in Oregon show the state is at a critical moment in the fight against the disease,” the task force reported. “Social distancing measures could alter the trajectory of new infections, which gives Oregon’s health care system the chance to ramp up to meet the coming surge. But the state has little margin for error. A return to ‘business as usual’ or slight differences in actual infection rates (compared to projected ones) could swamp hospitals with more coronavirus cases than they could treat.”

State agencies, hospitals and healthcare providers have already begun to implement the plan.

- The state is collecting PPE for re-distribution to facilities in need.

- Regional hospitals have signed mutual aid agreements to shift equipment, workforce and patients from overburdened facilities to others with adequate capacity.

- The state is working

with providers to stand-up alternate care locations (such as the Oregon Medical Station), identify and develop new alternate care sites, enable ambulatory care centers to house patients and re-purpose long-term care facilities.

- The state and hospitals are sharing hospital bed utilization data so hospitals can manage the use of beds and equipment across their region.

- The state is developing childcare options for healthcare workers, so their work isn’t interrupted by school closings and family responsibilities.

OHA Director Patrick Allen said, “Oregon’s healthcare system began preparing for a pandemic years ago, which gave us a head start on this plan. From expanding testing to securing more ventilators for Oregon hospitals, we are united by a set of common strategies to save lives in every corner of the state.”

The latest models state health officials released March 26 forecast the following outcomes for three different scenarios:

- Return to business as usual: If Oregon lifted all the social distancing measures state leaders have instituted in recent weeks, there will be an estimated 15,000 cumulative

infections by May 8 (within a range of 5,900-26,000). Approximately 1,100 people would need inpatient beds (850 AAC/250 ICU) across Oregon.

- Maintain bans on large gatherings and indefinite school closures: There would be an estimated 6,100 cumulative infections by May 8th (within a range of 2,000-12,000) and 340 people will need inpatient beds (260 AAC/80 ICU).

- Maintain aggressive interventions put into place on Monday, March 23 (i.e., Stay Home, Save Lives) with high public adherence: There will be an estimated 1,000 (within a possible range of 700-3,800) cumulative infections by May 8. Under this scenario, hospitals would have to boost capacity by a smaller number of beds.

“The models show that only aggressive interventions, like the Stay Home, Save Lives executive order Governor Brown issued on March 23, are predicted

to decrease the number of active infections,” the task force reported.

The models state health officials released today were prepared by the Institute for Disease Modeling. While similar to projections completed earlier by researchers at Oregon Health and Sciences University (OHSU), these newer models from IDM take into account the impact of community-level social distancing interventions, which were not incorporated into the OHSU study.

Researchers from OHSU and other hospitals are collaborating with OHA to forecast the COVID-19 burden for their specific hospitals based on this information.

Dr. Dean Sidelinger, state health officer at OHA, said:

“These projections tell us the sacrifices Oregonians are making right now can save lives. At the same time, they paint a dark picture of what could happen. We can’t afford to drop our guard.”

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SUDOKU SOLUTION

for puzzle on page 21

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4	9	5	2	1	6	3	7	8
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