

**CANCELED: COVID**  
is surging across  
Oregon and locally

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as Governor Kate Brown on Friday, November 13, announced a “two-week freeze” enacting renewed restrictions focused on limiting the spread of the coronavirus (*see sidebar for list of restrictions*).

Freeze measures will be in place from November 18 through December 2 through the entire state. Some “hot spot” counties, such as Multnomah County, will be under the freeze for longer periods.

“Maybe we thought the fight was over, but it’s not,” said Dr. Dean Sidelinger, the state epidemiologist, at Friday’s press conference. “This is likely the most dangerous time in Oregon.”

According to the Associated Press, “The percent of people testing positive was nearly 12 percent statewide, more than double what it was in the summer, according to Oregon Health Authority data.”

The most recent data shows that Sisters has seen 51 confirmed cases (cumulative), after holding at 35 for many weeks. Deschutes County is facing the sharpest increase in cases since the beginning of the pandemic, according to Deschutes County Health Services Director Dr. George Conway, who addressed the Bend City Council last Thursday.

“I think we all regard this as alarming,” Conway said.

As of last Friday, St. Charles Health System reported 14 COVID-19

**Two-week ‘freeze’  
calls for restrictions**

Governor Kate Brown laid out a list of tightened restrictions aimed at blunting a surge in COVID-19 cases in a press conference on Friday, November 13. Restrictions set to run from November 18 through December 2 include:

- Limiting restaurants and bars to take-out service only.
- Closing gyms and other indoor recreational facilities, museums, and indoor entertainment (like theaters).
- Closing outdoor recreational facilities, zoos, gardens and entertainment venues. City parks and

playgrounds remain open.

- Requiring all businesses to mandate that employees work from home when possible, and to close offices to the public.

- Limiting grocery and retail stores to 75 percent capacity and encouraging curbside pick-up service.

- Prohibiting visits at nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.

- Limiting social get-togethers, whether indoors or out, to no more than six people from two households.

- Limiting worship services to 25 people indoors or 50 people when outdoors.

patients, three of them in the ICU with two on a ventilator.

Last week, St. Charles CEO Joe Sluka stated that, “It appears we have officially hit a third wave. But unlike the last two, we never reset back to zero hospitalized patients. Our number of inpatients has held steady in recent weeks until last Friday (November 6) when it essentially doubled overnight.”

Sluka expressed concern that a potential spike associated with holiday gatherings could push the limits of the hospital’s capacity.

Dr. Joe Bachtold of St. Charles Health System told *The Nugget* that, “We’re seeing that the lion’s share of new cases are from people getting together in small groups — 10 or less.”

He said that, like other areas in the country, folks in Sisters are experiencing “COVID-fatigue.”

“People are letting their guard down,” he said. “We’re learning to live with COVID, but it doesn’t mean we can change our behavior. That’s going to be really important. We’re *all* tired of it. I get it.”

Dr. Bachtold noted that concerns over COVID-19 have led to an increase in doctor visits from people exhibiting symptoms that turn out to be regular seasonal illness.

“We’re mostly seeing people with early cold symptoms — the seasonal cold,” he said. “The lion’s share of those people are negative (when tested for COVID-19). They are calling to be evaluated when otherwise they wouldn’t have. If it was last year, they would not have darkened our door.”

But it is 2020 and Sisters continues to live in the shadow of a global pandemic that does not appear to be poised to ease any time soon.

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