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We're learning who's still getting sick

One thing in common: They're not vaccinated

Elizabeth Weise and Aleszu Bajak
USA TODAY

Oregon Health Authority director Patrick Allen recently described a tale of two pandemics.

"One is a pandemic that is dying out among people who are vaccinated. And the other is a pandemic that is raging as fiercely as ever among people who are unvaccinated," he said.

According to the state's most recent monthly report, 98% of Oregon's 16,097 COVID-19 cases and 91% of the 126 deaths reported in May involved individuals who were unvaccinated.

In Minnesota, the HealthPartners system has seen

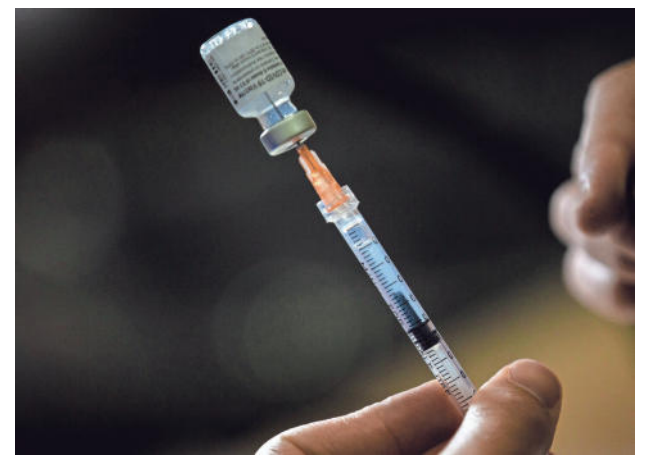
a "precipitous decline" in COVID-19 hospitalizations, says Dr. Mark Sannes, an infectious disease physician and senior medical director for the system, which operates nine hospitals and more than 55 clinics. But now, nearly every admitted patient he does see is unvaccinated.

"Less than 1% of our hospitalized COVID patients are vaccinated," he said.

In Ohio, at University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center, only 2% of the COVID-19 patients admitted in the last month were vaccinated, said Dr. Robert Salata, the hospital's physician-in-chief.

And at Sanford Health, which runs 44 medical centers and more than 200 clinics across the Dakotas, Minnesota and Iowa, less than 5% of the 1,456 patients admitted with COVID-19 so far this year were fully vaccinated, said spokesperson Angela Dejene.

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COVID-19 vaccines are drawn from a vial at the Oregon State Fairgrounds. BRIAN HAYES/STATESMAN JOURNAL FILE



The Willamette Queen sternwheeler cruises along the Willamette River in April. Owners Richard and Barbara Chesbrough are asking \$750,000 for the boat and business, Sternwheeler Excursions.

What's next for the Willamette Queen

Capi Lynn Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Richard and Barbara Chesbrough, the couple who brought history and nostalgia to Riverfront Park, are ready to retire.

They're selling the 87-foot sternwheeler they've owned and managed for 22 years, nearly all of it in Salem.

The Willamette Queen is not officially listed anywhere. They tried that pre-pandemic with what claimed to be the largest boat and yacht brokerage in the world, and it failed to yield any prospects.

They had a potential local buyer on the hook before that, but the deal fell through.

Since then there's been interest from residents of Independence and Newberg, causing some to worry an out-of-town buyer will whisk the Willamette Queen away.

"Part of it's emotional, people just love that boat," Salem Mayor Chuck Bennett told the Statesman Journal. "It's a landmark. We need to keep it."

The Chesbroughs would prefer it stay here, too, moored at the city's dock in the city's beloved downtown park. They've had a sometimes-rocky relationship with city and U.S. Coast Guard officials but endeared themselves to the community by providing

a unique venue to celebrate birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, graduations, class reunions and other special occasions.

"It's been a labor of love," Barbara said. "We've put everything into it."

They're asking \$750,000 for the boat and business, Sternwheeler Excursions, and both come with a slew of extras.

The last time the Willamette Queen was out of the water for inspection and repairs, in 2019, Richard said it appraised at \$800,000.

While not desperate to sell, they're eager to travel and spend more time with family while they still can. He's 80 and she's 75, and they have 10 children, 17 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren between them.

Merging two lives

Richard is a licensed captain and pilots the boat. Barbara oversees the business and runs the kitchen.

They bought the Willamette Queen together in 1998, although it's in her name only.

He had a background in boats, having grown up sailing on Cape Cod with his father, but their bank offered a better rate for a female business owner.

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Survey shows growing agreement with far-right arguments

Dianne Lugo Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Nearly four in 10 Oregonians strongly or somewhat agree with statements that reflect core arguments of white nationalist and other far-right groups, according to a new statewide survey.

DHM Research and the Oregon Values and Beliefs Center, both independent nonpartisan organizations, surveyed 603 Oregon residents in a 15-minute online questionnaire Jan. 8-13. They estimate the margin of error is between 2.4% and 4.0%. To recruit respondents, DHM used a professionally maintained panel. They also set demographic quotas and weighted data by area of the state, gender, age, and education to ensure a representative sample of Oregonians.

Survey results indicated that, when compared to a DHM Research panel in 2018, fewer Oregonians believed in protecting and preserving the country's multicultural heritage.

More agreed that America "must protect and preserve its white European heritage."

Specifically, when posed similar questions in 2018, 92% of those surveyed agreed with protecting and preserving America's multicultural heritage. In 2021, that agreement had lowered to 86% of respondents. In 2018, 31% believed that America had to protect or preserve its White European heritage, compared with 40% in 2021.

It's a "disturbing" revelation, said Lindsay Schubiner, a program director at Western States Center, the progressive nonprofit organization that commissioned the research.

She said the four in 10 represent a growing population in the state that is vulnerable to messages commonly used by white nationalists like the ones posed in the survey including, "America must protect and preserve its white European heritage" and "White people in America face discrimination and unfair treatment on the basis of their race."

"These numbers show that they're certainly not the majority, but I think this data does give insight into the size of the population that white nationalists may be able to appeal to or potentially recruit from," Schubiner said.

Growing support raises concerns

Open support for white nationalism and paramilitary groups remains low according to the survey, but about one in 10 Oregonians do support the causes. That support has risen from 6% in July 2020 to 11% in January.

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Human composting legalized under bill signed by Brown

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown has signed a bill passed by the Legislature legalizing human composting.

Brown signed House Bill 2574 on Tuesday, which will legalize what's also known as natural organic reduction, KOIN-TV reported. It also clarifies rules surrounding alkaline hydrolysis, known as aqua cremation. The law goes into effect July 1, 2022.

Rep. Pam Marsh, from in Southern Jackson County, who co-sponsored the bill with Rep. Brian Clem,

said she decided to sponsor the bill because her constituents are interested in alternative after-death options.

"My colleagues could see as well that in addition to providing families with a choice, it also is a business opportunity," she said.

Elizabeth Fournier, owner of Cornerstone Funeral Services in Boring, Oregon, and author of a green burial guidebook, provides "green" and eco-friendly after-death services, and has given clients the option of natural organic reduction since it was legalized in

Washington state in 2020.

Fournier takes bodies to Herland Forest in Wahkiacus, Washington. It's a natural burial cemetery about 100 miles east of Portland.

In 2020, Fournier witnessed her first natural organic reduction and said seeing the process for herself made her more comfortable in talking to her clients about that option.

Marsh said the state plans to have its rules in place for natural organic reduction facilities by 2022.

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