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Essential, but still facing troubles

Oregon's farmworkers disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, new study shows

Dora Totoian Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

As COVID-19 cases rose in March 2020, Jennifer Martinez-Medina knew the pandemic would exacerbate long-standing inequities for farmworkers, who had been labeled "essential workers" as most other industries shuttered or altered their operations.

Oregon's estimated 173,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers continued working side-by-side in the fields, often without masks or easy access to hand-washing fa-

cilities. Language barriers, a lack of work security and immigration status added barriers to accessing information and services.

Martinez-Medina, a doctoral candidate from Portland State University, grew up in California with farmworker parents and wanted to help document the pandemic's impact.

She and dozens of others have spent more than a year coordinating the Oregon portion of the COVID-19 Farmworker Study, a project spanning California, Oregon and Washington that asked farmworkers about their working conditions, mental health,

child care and more during the pandemic.

She noted the project fills a gap, as it can be difficult for state agencies and other organizations to collect information on farmworkers and may rely on outdated data.

"Their testimony is really critical because we get to hear directly from them, which is an opportunity we don't often get," Martinez-Medina said. "What this study makes us do is see farmworkers in their full selves — inside and outside of the workplace."

The project recently released its Oregon phase one final report, which surveyed 300 migrant and seasonal farmworkers, many of whom reported experiencing dangerous conditions at work, significant losses of income and increased stress levels.

The issues were even greater for Indige-

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Alejandra Morales Buscio, of Salem, reaches up to pull the leaf canopy over pinot noir grapes on July 8 to shade the fruit from the sun at Willamette Valley Vineyards in Turner. ANDREW SELSKY/ASSOCIATED PRESS



Players from Preserve Cannablazers and Blaque during the Hoopla 3-on-3 basketball tournament in Salem on Aug. 7. New Census data shows Oregon grew more diverse over the last decade. ABIGAIL DOLLINS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

As COVID-19 cases rise, know where to get vaccinated in Marion, Polk counties

Virginia Barreda Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Oregon officials are imploring the public to get vaccinated as COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, driven by the more contagious delta variant, continue to surge across the state.

The recent rise in cases and hospitalizations prompted Gov. Kate Brown to bring back mask-wearing in all indoor spaces. Brown also gave the green light to deploy up to 1,500 Oregon National Guard members to 20 hospitals to help overwhelmed health care workers starting Aug. 20.

The state, along with the rest of the country, has seen an increase in breakthrough cases, but health officials are still urging the public to get the vaccine, contending the majority of hospitalizations and deaths involve unvaccinated individuals.

Breakthrough cases are instances where a person tests positive for COVID-19 at least 14 days after completing a vaccine series.

So far, 2.35 million people in Oregon had completed a vaccine series.

"The unrelenting delta variant is sweeping through our communities and there are no immediate signs that this rising tide will subside any time soon unless we act immediately to reverse this dangerous trend," Dean Sidelinger, Oregon's state health officer, said.

"If you are unvaccinated, your risk of being sickened by the virus or ending up seriously ill or even dying from COVID-19 has never been greater," Sidelinger said.

All Oregonians older than 12 are eligible to get the vaccine. The vaccine is free. People ages 12 to 17 must get the Pfizer vaccine and those younger than 14 need a parent or guardian to sign a parental consent.

Here's a list of vaccination sites in Marion and Polk counties, based on county website information:

Marion County

Mt. Angel

Mt. Angel Drug, Hi-School Pharmacy: Accepting walk-ins

• Hours: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday.

• Location: 105 N. Main St.

• Contact: Call the pharmacy at 503-845-6133.

Keizer

Salem Health Medical Clinic - Keizer: Accepting walk-ins and appointments for Pfizer

• Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday-Friday.

• Location: 5100 River Road N.

• Contact: Call ahead at 503-393-2533 to check availability before visiting. Walk-in hours end one hour before the clinic closes.

Salem

Salem Health Medical Clinic - Boulder Creek: Accepting appointments and walk-ins for Pfizer

• Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday.

• Location: 2485 12th St. SE.

• Contact: Call ahead at 503-363-8047 to check availability before visiting. Walk-in hours end one hour before the clinic closes.

Salem Health Medical Clinic - Skyline Village: Ac-

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Portrait of change

Oregon, local communities grow more ethnically, racially diverse, data shows

Dianne Lugo, Mabinty Quarshie, Yoonserk Pyun and Mike Stucka | USA TODAY NETWORK

The U.S. Census Bureau released data outlining shifts in national and local population counts over the past decade. • The data is the largest release from the 2020 count so far and it comes after COVID-19 significantly affected the Bureau's ability to collect and process the data, a potential source of undercounting. Activists also point to former President Donald Trump's attempt to include a citizenship question in the Census as a potential driver of decreased response rates from communities of color. • Nonetheless, the snapshot showed a population that is more ethnically and racially diverse than it has ever been, both nationally and locally.

Nationally, people who identify as non-Hispanic white shrank by 8.6% since 2010's census. People who identify as white in combination with another race grew by 316%.

Oregon saw similar changes.

Figures below show the U.S. Census Bureau's 2020 counts, as well as the USA TODAY analysis of how those counts have changed from the 2010 Census in Oregon. Where detailed demographic data appear, all racial groups are included.

The statewide population grew 10.6%, with 406,182 new Oregonians responding to the census. Oregonians identifying as white decreased by 1.1%.

The state's Black, American Indian, Asian and Hispanic population rose by 19.4%, 18.4%, 37.7% and 30.8% respectively. The state's Pacific Islander population grew the most, with a 43.3% change.

A total of 443,339 people identified as two or more races in Oregon, a 206.3% change.

'More multiracial and more diverse'

The Census Bureau has warned to make comparisons between the 2020 and 2010 Census race data "with caution." This is because changes made to the Hispanic origin and race questions and changes in the way the census codes responses may have

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State seeks funds for safety improvements

Bill Poehler Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

At least 12 people died in traffic crashes on roads going to and from the Aurora Donald Interchange in the first two years after the nearby Dundee Newberg Bypass was partially completed in 2018.

The interchange, Interstate 5 exit 278, was built in the 1960s. Now, about 32,000 vehicles use it each day. All those cars and trucks enter and exit the freeway by one-lane ramps. There are no signals to aid drivers trying to make nearly blind turns.

Crashes on the interchange are frequent.

Traffic on it was bad in 2017 when the Oregon Leg-

islature appropriated about half of what was needed to make improvements.

It's getting worse.

The state is seeking the remaining \$20 million of \$48 million it needs, and it's hoping to get it from President Joe Biden's \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package.

Congressman Kurt Schrader said the state and Marion County have put an emphasis on the project.

"I think that helps us sell these types of projects," Schrader said. "That makes it more attractive to the powers that be here in Washington, D.C. to get that

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Oregon Army National Guard Pfc. Marin Stoller administers a vaccine at the COVID-19 vaccination site at the Oregon State Fairground in Salem, Oregon on Wednesday, April 28, 2021. BRIAN HAYES / STATESMAN JOURNAL