

**OUR VIEW**

## Underlying conditions make COVID-19 worse

Everyone who has died in Oregon from COVID-19 has had an underlying medical condition. So, it was vital that the Oregon Health Authority release the data showing what those conditions have been.

After the EO Media Group — the company that owns The Observer — published an editorial online last week calling on the OHA to do so, it told us it was planning to do so.

The OHA made the data public Tuesday. Cardiovascular disease was the cause associated the most — in nearly 59% of the deaths. That was followed by neurological conditions with 49%, a category that includes cancer and other conditions with 42%, and diabetes at 33%. There are other categories, including being a former smoker at nearly 25%. The numbers add up to more than 100% because some people have more than one underlying condition.

The data is based on an analysis of 73 of the more than 100 people who have died from COVID-19 in Oregon. It is consistent with the warnings from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention about who is at higher risk of the disease. You can see the full chart on the OHA website.

Most people do not experience severe symptoms if they contract COVID-19. It's not by any means pleasant, but it's primarily fever and cough. Some people don't have any symptoms. If an infected person is older or has an underlying medical condition, though, it can make it harder for their bodies to combat the infection. The disease can trigger the immune system to overreact, leading to devastation to the lungs and other organs.

The message to take away is this: The disease does hit people harder who are older. But anyone who has an underlying medical condition is at more serious risk. So, if you have a family member or a friend in those categories, please do what you can to help them stay healthy.

Remember, it has killed children in the United States, too. Keep them safe. Follow the precautions you know by heart by now. Government officials in Oregon are planning cautiously to gradually reopen the state. It's up to us to work together to ensure that succeeds and people stay healthy.

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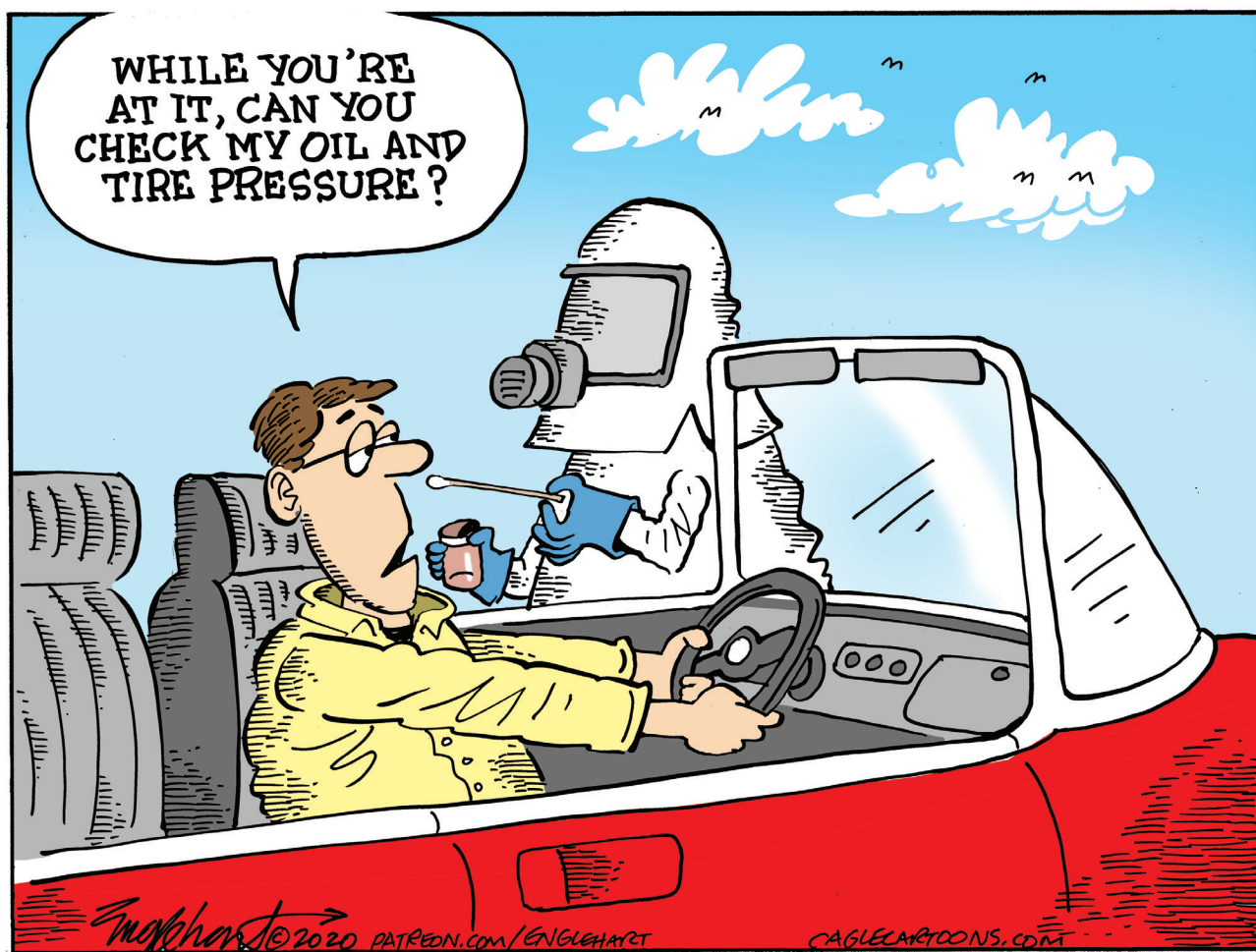
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**OTHER VIEWS**

## Experience with homeschooling reveals challenges

Dear Ms. Beardsley, I hope you're doing well. I miss seeing you and my classmates at school every day, but homeschooling is working out well for me.

Mommy and Daddy are doing the best they can to make sure my siblings and I continue to learn during the covid-19 pandemic. They make sure we stick to a schedule like the one our school follows.



**TOM PURCELL**  
SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

But they aren't getting along as well as they usually do. Every night, they hit the box wine harder than they ever did before.

I suppose that's because Mommy is a lawyer and, since her work has been impacted by the virus, she's home a lot. Daddy has a construction company but his projects are on hold, so he's home a lot, too.

We've never spent so much time in the house together, and that has its challenges.

Anyhow, though they aren't professional teachers like you, they're helping me learn interesting things I never thought about before.

Besides my regular lessons, they thought I should read classic literature. The first book they assigned is "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" by Mark Twain. I was shocked

by some language in the book, but my parents helped me understand that its painful words and thoughts remind us of what people in our country did wrong in the past, so we can better focus on how to do things right, now and in the future.

That makes perfect sense to me. So I was surprised to learn that some schools have banned the book because it might cause some discomfort. But isn't that the point? Isn't literature supposed to open our eyes and make us think?

My siblings and I are doing really well at our math, science and English lessons. But Mommy and Daddy say that the thing we most need to learn is the ability to think for ourselves. They want us to use reason — not emotion — to make sound decisions. They call this "critical thinking." They worry that too few people are thinking things through these days and that that is dangerous for our country.

So I was disappointed to learn that a Harvard law professor argues that homeschooling should be banned. Professor Elizabeth Bartholet said in Harvard Magazine that it's authoritarian — that it allows powerful parents to lord over their powerless children. She said parents who homeschool their children are overwhelm-

ingly Christian and that some are "extreme religious ideologues" who question science and promote female subservience and white supremacy. She said that children should "grow up exposed to... democratic values, ideas about nondiscrimination and tolerance of other people's viewpoints."

Well, I agree with her second point, but her first point is a reach. It appears she is sharing an emotional reaction to her stereotypical perception of parents who homeschool, rather than applying critical thinking.

The fact is about 4% of U.S. children are homeschooled. Several studies show they score significantly better on standardized tests than their public-school peers — regardless of race or economic background. The fact is that the majority of homeschooled kids go on to flourish in their lives.

Mommy and Daddy have their flaws, but they sure are helping me learn how to reason and think. In fact, we are all thinking it is best that they continue homeschooling my siblings and me after the pandemic ends.

I'll be sure to visit you often if my schooling continues at home. I look forward to seeing you soon.

**About the Author**  
*Tom Purcell is a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review humor columnist and is nationally syndicated exclusively by Cagle Cartoons Inc.*

## Your views

### No one should be afraid to report hate crimes

Response to the Q&A with sheriff candidates:

Why would Boyd Rasmussen say he will especially defend the First Amendment? Sadly, this is now code to permit supremacist groups freedom to violate the rights of others.

We have laws prohibiting verbal harassment and intimidation of people with less power than you. Let's see our sheriff uphold those laws. No one should be afraid to report hate crimes. Yet I'm sure they are afraid.

Anyone who wished was able to criticize our governor and post yard signs. This is what the First Amendment protects. It is not at risk.

Mary Cooke Cove

### District Attorney's move politicizes court system

I read Sabrina Thompson's

recent article in The Observer ("DA moves to sideline judge," April 25) with shock and dismay. In it, she report's on Union County District Attorney Kelsie McDaniel's effort to sideline Circuit Judge Wes Williams from court proceedings. How could this be? What were her motivations?

Reading over her list of complaints I noted a common concern — Judge Williams had failed to adhere to local standards. I was deeply perplexed.

What were these local standards? How did they come about? Who authorized them? Was it the members of the police force and the DA herself? As a member of the community and as a citizen of La Grande, don't I have a right to know?

Community standards are typically derived from the community in which they apply. I would argue that

the Union County community voted for its local legal standards when, knowing Wes' background and reputation, they elected him as Union County judge.

Does the district attorney have the right to seek the recusal of a duly elected judge who was elected based on the standards that he has consistently upheld?

Knowing Wes, and being totally convinced of his integrity and fairness, I contest that his standards trump McDaniel's standards, for they are the standards outlined in Article 6 of the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees fair trials and procedures.

Let's not politicize our local court system. Let's uphold the rule of law and the principle that one must be presumed innocent before proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

D. Linda Garcia  
La Grande

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