

# VACCINES

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The final two groups are everyone else 45 and older on June 1 and everyone 16 and older on July 1.

President Joe Biden has set May 1 as the date when states should open eligibility to all those 16 and older. But Gov. Kate Brown said the state would stick with its current priority system until there is a firm commitment from federal health authorities of a major increase in vaccine being sent to the state.

Oregon health officials felt burned in January when they announced eligibility for everyone over 65 based on what turned out to be an erroneous statement by federal health officials in the Trump administration. Brown had to reverse the order and restore a tiered priority system.

Since the arrival of the first vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna in December, about 1.36 million people in Oregon are in the nine priority groups already eligible.

But the state on Wednesday, March 17, reported total shots of 1,363,311. The vast majority of the shots are the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, which require two shots spaced about a month apart.

That translates into almost 682,000 two-shot inoculations, enough for less than half of those eligible. The gap between eligibility and availability has resulted in widespread frustration over trying to book appointments with county health authorities, pharmacies or other medical providers.

Recently, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine that requires just one shot arrived in Oregon.

Through Wednesday, a total of 1,777,145 doses of vaccines have been deliv-

## VACCINE ELIGIBILITY

**Phase 1A (December 2020): 400,000**

- Medical and health care workers, people and staff in nursing homes, home care workers, disabled receiving care at home.

**Phase 1B (Jan. 25) — Educators: 153,000**

- Teachers, schools staff, day care workers.

**Phase 1B (Feb. 8 — March 1) — Over 65: 795,000**

- Rolling eligibility that began with those 80 and older on Feb. 8 and dropped five years each week until everyone 65 and over was eligible.

- Court order for corrections facilities (Feb. 2): 15,000

- A federal court order added inmates and staff at correctional institutions to be retroactively added to Phase 1A eligibility.

**Phase 1B, Group 6 (March 29): 530,000**

- Adults 45–64 with health conditions that put them at increased risk of severe illness or death from infection. People 16 and older who are pregnant. Homeless people. Many food processing workers and farmworkers. Many senior housing residents not previously covered. People displaced by wildfires and wildland firefighters.

**Phase 1B, Group 7 (May 1): 550,000**

- People age 16–44 with underlying health conditions at risk of severe illness or death from infection. Frontline workers as defined by CDC. Multigenerational household members.

**Phase 2, Group 1 (June 1): Number not yet released**

- Everyone 45 and older.

**Phase 2, Group 2 (July 1): Number not yet released**

- Everyone 16 and older: TBD

**Future group: Children: No date or number yet released**

- There are no vaccines approved for those under 16, though Moderna has begun trials on a version of its vaccine.

ered to Oregon.

Oregon has averaged about 24,000 shots per day, putting it in the middle of states nationwide.

Because of Brown's decision to prioritize educators over seniors in January, the state is below the national average for seniors who have been inoculated. Though vaccine is provided through the federal government and the Centers for Disease Control has a suggested prioritization list, states ultimately have authority to decide who gets inoculated at what point.

Oregon has been one of the safest places in the country during the pandemic. The state has the fourth lowest number of COVID-19 cases per capita among all states, according to an ongoing count by the New York Times. Only Hawaii, Vermont and Maine have performed better since the first COVID-19 case was reported in Washington on Jan. 21, 2020.

Over the past week,

Oregon has the second lowest number of cases per capita, with only Hawaii reporting fewer infections.

Oregon has the fifth lowest per capita fatality rate since the pandemic began, with Hawaii, Vermont, Alaska and Maine reporting lower.

Over the past week, Oregon has the third lowest per capita fatality rate, with only Alaska and Hawaii scoring lower.

OHA reported Oregon as of March 17 has had 160,259 cases of COVID-19 and 2,349 deaths since February 2020. Union County's case total stood at 1,338 with 20 fatalities. Wallowa County's total was 144 cases and five deaths.

Nationwide, there have been more than 29.5 million COVID-19 cases, with 536,978 deaths as of the morning of March 17, according to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center. Worldwide, there have been more than 120.8 million cases and 2.67 million deaths.

Senate, where passage is expected.

About 1,000 service-members from Oregon remain MIA, mostly from World War II.

## Power trio appears at subcommittee meeting

The three most powerful politicians in Salem appeared together — virtually — on Monday for a Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Education hearing.

Gov. Kate Brown, Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, and Kotek spoke in support of their joint proposal for a \$250 million summer learning and child care package.

Supporters say the program will help thousands of Oregon children catch up on learning and socializing after a year of mostly virtual schooling. The legislation "will set our kids up for success by letting them be kids again, in environments that foster creativity, learning and joy," Brown said.

Hearings on the program and other education spending continued Wednesday, March 17.

## Republicans push for Capitol reopening

Senate Republicans who staged a one-day walkout last month, and their counterparts in the House requiring the reading of bills in full, both say one of the central issues is their demand to reopen the Capitol to the public.

"What the people of Oregon want is for this Capitol to be open and to have access to in-person hearings," said Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, during comments on the Senate floor March 11. "Many other states are already doing this with greater COVID problems than exist in Oregon today."

The Capitol has been closed for a year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ZIP code around the Capitol has had the highest number of positive cases of any in the state.

Control of the Capitol falls to the Legislature.

# COACH

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Howe's resignation included an apology.

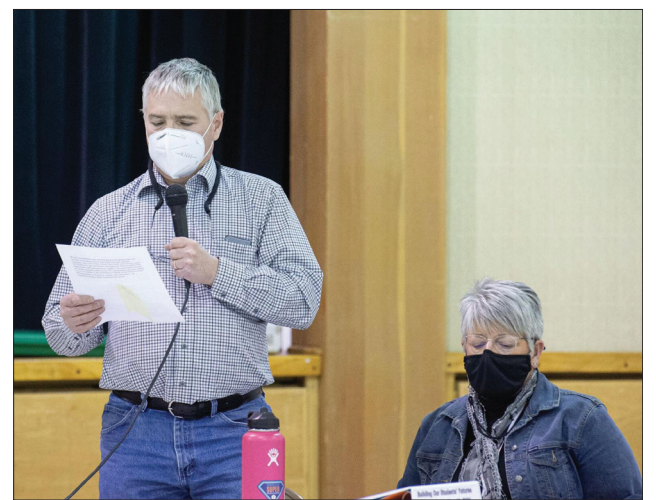
"I am deeply sorry for any hurt I have caused my students, coaches and community members, staff members or board members," Howe said in his prepared remarks. "That was not my intent. It was never my intent to undermine other sports programs or coaches. If that occurred, I apologize for that."

Six parents and Wallowa School District staff at the meeting spoke during the public comment period. Most expressed support for the school, and for Jones, who came under fire at the March 8 meeting, as a competent and caring administrator.

Wallowa first-grade teacher Kelsey Layton praised Jones for "inspiring, encouraging and working alongside of us to build relationships with (teachers) and families during this unprecedented year."

"Students are the No. 1 concern," said Melissa Lowe, who teaches Title 1 classes. "We need to remember in our community that education safety and well-being of our students, your children, and education should be first and foremost, not sports."

But parent Joe Miles criticized the school board for a lack of com-



Ellen Morris Bishop/Wal- lowa County Chieftain David Howe, Wallowa High School's principal and girls basketball coach, reads his letter of resignation from the coaching post to the Wallowa School Board on Monday, March 15, 2021.

munity and educational leadership.

"I support you guys, but at the same time I do have a higher expectation of anybody in a leadership position," he said. "There's a lot of frustrated people in this community."

Those thoughts echoed some of the comments made to the school board at the March 8 meeting. They included concerns about lack of respect for students, student athletes and Wallowa's rural culture.

At the well-attended March 8 meeting, the entire WHS senior class presented a letter regarding parts of the school's mask policy. Specifically, the seniors were speaking against them being the ones called on to enforce the school's

mask mandates rather than administrators. They also spoke on concerns that this year's senior trip might be canceled due to the seniors' lack of enforcement of mask-wearing by all students in the high school.

But the trip still is on, Jones said.

It is tentatively planned as a three-day jaunt either to the Oregon Coast or Triple Play Family Fun Park in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

The final decision on destination and COVID protocols will be made as the date gets nearer, she said.

"I think COVID definitely has placed a lot of stress on families and the community," Jones said. "The more we can have kids have more normalcy, the better off the kids are."

# RESERVES

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he said. "That's no kidding. That's from patrol to corrections."

Primarily, the reserves will ride with full-time staff, but there will be opportunities for the reserve officers to do security work for events in the future.

"I would like to see it rolled out now, but honestly, it's going to be April before we get all the applications in," Bowen said.

"It takes time. The sooner the better," he added. "We got the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show that's coming up. They're gonna do the rodeo this year. Hopefully we'll have some reserves that are ready to go by then."

Bowen also said he plans to add a cadet program that will train

alongside the reserve officers.

"Working as a school resource officer, I saw a lot of our kids in high school who are interested in law enforcement, but there's nothing that holds them in that field, if you will, between the ages of 18 to 21, and we end up losing them in that profession," said Bowen. "They go find something else."

Deputy Dustin Heath will be the coordinator for the reserve program, and deputies Justin Hernandez and Tony Humphries will serve as co-coordinators, while deputy Patricia Kelly will be leading the cadet program for the office — a program she went through as a young officer.

Cadets won't carry firearms, but they will receive basic training on self-defense and conflict resolution. The reserves and the cadets will train under the same conditions

and receive much of the same coursework through the program at the sheriff's office.

Like the fire department volunteer program, Bowen said, the reserve program expects to lose about half of their applicants through the training process before graduation — usually due to time commitments or lack of suitability or motivation to complete the program. The program itself will take approximately six months to complete.

Those accepted by the sheriff's office into the program will have to provide their own gear and equipment, although the sheriff's office will provide critical safety equipment, such as vests and uniforms. If necessary, deputies will donate or lend gear to those who need it.

"We're not going to lose anybody," Bowen said, "because they can't afford to do it."

# LOGJAM

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House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, has countered by cutting into breaks and extending evening floor sessions.

## Bill for Oregon MIA advances

The first bill of the day that was read out loud had complete bipartisan support. The House unanimously approved HB 2700, which would include Oregonians who were listed as missing in action in wars, but whose remains were later found and returned to Oregon, among those eligible for roadside memorial signs.

The bill is being championed by veterans activist Dick Tobiason of the Bend Heroes Foundation. Rep. Jack Zika, R-Redmond, thanked Tobiason on behalf of the Legislature for bringing the issue to them.

"They may be gone, but are not forgotten," Zika said.

The bill next goes to the

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