

## STATE BRIEFS

### Oregon signs onto legal settlement over opioid crisis

SALEM — The state could receive up to \$332 million in a deal with Johnson & Johnson and three major drug distributors.

More than 100 American die everyday from opioid overdoses. But there’s a population of patients who have to live with long-term pain and for them, opioids can be a lifeline.

Oregon has now joined the ranks of states who’ve signed on to a \$26 billion legal settlement with Johnson & Johnson and three drug distributors over the companies’ alleged roles in the opioid epidemic.

Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum announced Monday, Aug. 23, that the state stands to receive up to \$332 million from the agreement over the next 18 years, money that will be used on drug treatment and abuse prevention.

Oregon’s announcement comes as a 30-day window for states to sign off on the nationwide settlement comes to a close. The majority of states have agreed to the deal, according to Rosenblum, though some have balked. Among them: Washington, where Attorney General Bob Ferguson rejected the deal, saying the state could get more money in court.

### COVID surge causes Oregon schools to delay start dates

SALEM — With COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations surging in Oregon at least three school districts have pushed back their start date.

Oregon Public Broadcasting reported the Alsea School District in Benton County was set to start Monday, Aug. 23. But on Aug. 21, Superintendent Marc Thielman announced a delay due to an elementary staff member testing positive for COVID-19.

The first day of school will now be Aug. 30.

Two other districts, both in Douglas County, have also announced delays. Douglas County has had 1,125 cases per 100,000 people in the last seven days, the highest in the state. In the Oregon Health Authority’s Aug. 23 update, Douglas County reported 398 new cases and five deaths between Aug. 20 and Aug. 22.

The school year will now begin Sept. 7 for South Umpqua High School students due to staff members in isolation or quarantine.

The Elkton school board voted Monday evening to delay the start of school for three weeks “due to the current surge of COVID cases in Douglas County.”

### Man convicted in 3rd sex crime case gets life in prison

HILLSBORO — A man convicted of felony sex crimes for the third time has been sentenced to life in prison without parole.

Justin Lugo, 37, of Hillsboro, was convicted in May of sexually abusing a female while she slept in 2019, according to the Washington County District Attorney’s Office.

Washington County Circuit Judge Janelle Whipper convicted Lugo of first-degree and third-degree sexual abuse. She sentenced him Tuesday. Lugo was also convicted of assaulting a public safety officer while in custody.

Lugo was previously convicted of sexually abusing a girl he knew between 2002 and 2005 and convicted of rape and sodomy in a 2008 case involving a girl under age 16. Oregon law subjects people convicted in three separate felony sex crime cases to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

— The Associated Press and Oregon Public Broadcasting

# Masks now required at outdoor events

New rule goes into effect Friday, Aug. 27, across the state

By GARY A. WARNER  
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Gov. Kate Brown has expanded a mandatory mask order to include large outdoor gatherings as well as indoor gatherings.

The new rule will go into effect Friday, Aug. 27, and includes everyone aged 5 and older regardless of whether or not they are vaccinated. Brown also is recommending masks for private outdoor gatherings, though they are not mandatory.

“The delta variant is spreading fast and wide, throwing our state into a level of crisis we have not yet seen in the pandemic,” Brown said. “Cases and hospitalizations are at a record high.”

The immediate impact



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

Gov. Kate Brown has expanded a mandatory mask order to include large outdoor gatherings as well as indoor gatherings. The new rule will be in effect for the Oregon State Fair in Salem and for the Pendleton Round-Up.

will be on those going to outdoor sports events, fairs and large gatherings. The new rule will be in effect for the Oregon State Fair in Salem that begins Aug. 27 and for the Pendleton Round-Up Sept. 11. Masks will be required for any college football game as well.

Oregon’s hospitals continue to head toward unknown medical territory as the number of hospitalized COVID-19

intensive care units and 2,804 new cases. The 30 reported deaths pushed the monthly total to 189, tying August for the fourth deadliest month of the 18-month pandemic — with a week to go. December 2020 recorded a record of 603 deaths.

Epidemiologists around the nation have noted an increase in infections that cannot be traced to an indoor spread.

“We are starting to see instances where cases are clustering around events, like music festivals, that happen outdoors,” said Dr. Dean Sidelinger, the state epidemiologist, in the statement.

A sharp spike in COVID-19 infections driven by the highly contagious delta variant has swept Oregon since July, with increased infection and hospitalization rates. Unvaccinated Oregonians have become sicker longer when infected.

The Oregon Health

Authority reported just 7% of adult staffed hospital beds and 8% of adult staffed intensive care unit beds in the state were available on Aug. 22. OHA has forecast it will be 500 beds short at the peak of the spike, when daily cases could top 5,000 under some scenarios.

The mask rules for outdoors mirror the existing indoor mandate. People do not need to wear masks while drinking, eating or sleeping. Masks are not required for those singing, speaking or otherwise performing in a public setting, during sports games or training. It also has an exception for the homeless.

Because of the speed of the spread of the delta variant, health officials say it is too late for the two-shot Moderna or Pfizer vaccinations to have full effect before the current spike spreads throughout communities.

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