

# SPOKESMAN Opinion

## OUR VIEW

### How to get vaccinated for monkeypox in Deschutes County

New York City's monkeypox outbreak seems to finally be dying down, but there's one thing we've learned in the past couple years of living through a pandemic: It's good to be prepared.

Monkeypox is a type of smallpox virus that is primarily spread through skin-to-skin contact. The illness can also be transmitted via contact with fabric that has touched monkeypox sores. Common symptoms include a rash, fever and sore throat.

Although it is not usually deadly, the virus can last from two to four weeks and be generally unpleasant, according to Deschutes County Health Services. It can take up to three weeks for monkeypox symptoms to appear after exposure.

Although there are no confirmed or suspected cases in Deschutes County, the region's health services are offering first dose vaccine shots for people in eligible groups. I got mine Aug. 17.

Deschutes County offers the first dose of the FDA-approved JYNNEOS vaccine to those 18 or older who have a known or likely monkeypox exposure, have traveled to areas where monkeypox cases are more likely to be found or have had skin-to-skin contact with men who have sex with men.

Still, Deschutes County Health Services acknowledges, monkeypox is not limited to one specific community. Although a majority of cases in this country have been among queer men, "there is nothing specific about men who have sex with men that puts someone at higher risk for getting hMPXV," Deschutes County wrote on its monkeypox page. "This happens to be the first socially-connected group that has been affected with this particular outbreak."

Oregon currently has more than 100 confirmed and presumptive cases, mostly among adult men. It's worth noting that testing and vaccination efforts have been primarily targeted toward queer men, so it is possible that a larger percentage of queer men who have been exposed to the virus are getting diagnosed than the rest of the United States population.

Due to limited supply, the county is currently only offering the first JYNNEOS dose. You can receive the second dose four weeks after you get your first, and hopefully more supply will be available by then. The health official who administered my vaccine told me that exact efficacy numbers are not available at this time, because monkeypox isn't widespread enough to be able to scientifically analyze it.

Fortunately, if you fall into a high risk category, it's pretty easy to get vaccinated. It's also relatively anonymous. Although I'm now in the state of Oregon's vaccination records, I could've gotten my shot without anyone around me knowing.

I called Deschutes County Health Services at 541-322-7155 to set up an appointment one day in advance.

The woman picked up, asked me a couple health questions — including related to sexual history, as she was required to do — and helped me find a time. She understood the importance of privacy, she said, so she gave me her cell and told me to text her when I entered the lobby of the health services building instead of going to the front counter.

The shot itself was pretty easy, too.

On the day of my appointment, I showed up to the Deschutes County Health Services building near St. Charles in Bend. I checked in with the person I'd called the day before and she came out to the lobby to find me.

She led me through the waiting room and into the first patient room on the left. We went over some basic information about the vaccine and she gave me the opportunity to ask questions.

We talked a little bit about side effects. Unlike COVID-19 vaccines, JYNNEOS doesn't normally wipe people out the day after. The most common side effects are soreness in your arm and redness, according to a New York City Health FAQ. Other side effects include fatigue, headaches and muscle pain.

My arm was sore to the touch for about a week after I got my shot, and the area around the injection site was pink for a couple days.

At the time of my appointment, about 15 people had come in to get their vaccine in Deschutes County, though the provider who gave me mine said she anticipated that those numbers would increase when there is a first local case. Hopefully the region will have more of a vaccine supply by then, she said.

After that, she gave me a form to fill out with some basic information about myself. The vaccine is free, so I was not asked to provide insurance information.

Then we got to the shot; a little prick in my non-dominant arm, followed by 15 minutes of waiting to ensure that I wouldn't suffer from serious side effects. And I was free to go.

■ Leo Baudhuin is a summer intern for the Redmond Spokesman and a senior at the University of Oregon.

## WRITE TO US

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### How to submit:

- Email is preferred: news@redmondspokesman.com
- Or mail to: 361 SW Sixth Street, Redmond OR 97756



## GUEST COLUMN

### Support for city staff, safe parking

BY CLIFFORD EVELYN

On Tuesday, Aug. 23, Redmond city council addressed concerns in regard to safe parking near the Pershall Neighborhood.

Citizens made comments in favor of safe parking, as well as against it. Both sides made excellent points in regard to the benefits and the concerns of the program.

For the record, Safe Parking has been in place and operating efficiently at Mountainview Fellowship Church and Pastor Rick Russell and the staff has done an excellent job at managing it. Because of their attentiveness, this program has been successful.

I am disheartened by the fact that some found this meeting to be an opportunity to degrade the efforts of a pastor, city manager, city staff, the behavioral health case manager and the council who have worked so diligently to address an issue that has affected cities across the United States. Instead, they took the opportunity to exacerbate the issue instead of looking at finding a resolution. We did receive some proposed properties recommended for safe parking by citizens and this may prove to be helpful in the future.

I want to be clear in saying that as a Redmond city councilor I have complete confidence in our city manager, Keith Witcosky, his management team, and my col-

leagues on city council.

I also want to say that we, the city council, was briefed on safe parking on various occasions, and last fall the city invested \$50,000 in ARPA (federal) funds toward this. In addition, state legislation (HB 2006) allows cities to take action in an effort to address homelessness issues and this aligns with reasoning for the safe parking program. The breakdown in communication issue will be addressed at the upcoming meeting Sept. 6.

I want to remind everyone that the city of Redmond had a prime opportunity to address homelessness with help from the ARPA funds. After the council listened to several very detailed presentations explaining how the plans would help the homeless, the council — in a 4-2 vote — rejected using ARPA funds for that purpose.

The presentation was made twice. Safe parking was then presented as an alternative to at least do something to begin addressing this issue.

Rick Russell spearheaded this effort and keep in mind he is a citizen — he does not work for the city. He is a community pastor who cares very deeply about our city and the homeless in our city. He used his church to initiate a safe parking program and to help make a difference in our city. Instead of showing gratitude for his efforts, there are those who have chosen to ridicule and criticize him for his efforts instead of applauding his efforts.

Redmond City Council and its staff are

going to do what's in the best interest of the city of Redmond. Keeping Redmond safe for everyone is and always will be a top priority. Getting a handle on homelessness is also a priority. Our job is to find solutions and in doing so we will be transparent and demonstrate a level of character and integrity in this process.

There was a communication breakdown at some point, but I'm sure it was not intentional. Everyone wants the homeless issue addressed, but only a few are doing anything to ensure that it is.

I know that it's campaign time, but using this as a platform is not how we resolve real issues such as this. We are talking about human lives.

Safe parking is a short-term solution and eventually that area will be a park. I also have complete confidence that our police department will be ready to respond if the need arises. In summary, our city manager, deputy city manager and city attorney and their team are very competent and understand the obstacles.

To win and be effective, I want our citizens to know what we are really dealing with, so we have to dig beyond the distorted perceptions and deal with the reality.

We must first get past the distorted perceptions about the reason for homelessness and then we can get serious about addressing it with a positive plan in place. Safe parking is the beginning of that positive plan.

■ Clifford Evelyn is a Redmond city councilor.

## GUEST COLUMN

### Senior citizens deserve break on property taxes

BY GREGORY HAVENS

Something needs to be done for our senior citizens on their property taxes.

They need to be grandfathered in, like California did several years ago. We have widows and widowers out there who have lost their mates — essentially they have lost half their income.

They should not have to take out a reverse mortgage or count on their kids to keep them in their homes. Most of them have

worked all their lives and never taken one unemployment check or any kind of welfare or government handout. They never abused the system.

I went to a meeting a while back and listened to a property appraiser talk on taxes. It's pretty sad to sit there and see some older people with tears running down their faces, not knowing what to do. Some have spouses in nursing homes. They are lost. It's not fair that they are being forced out of their home after all

their years of hard work.

We've had people come into this state with more money than brains, and run property taxes up and way out of reason.

You can say that older folks should sell, but where would they go and not have to pay through the nose to keep a roof over their head?

Most of these people are proud people. They don't have their hand out for a free ride, like so many people do in this day and age. Something must

be done.

Speaking for myself: I am 90 years old, a widower. And it's getting rougher each year to make ends meet.

Also, I think it is wonderful that widows of veterans get a small break on their property taxes. But why doesn't a veteran who is a widower — he has to be 40% disabled to get the same. It doesn't seem right to me.

■ Gregory Havens is a Redmond resident and veteran of the U.S. Navy.

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