

IN BRIEF

Pacific County urges masks after virus cases surge

LONG BEACH, Wash. — Pacific County health officials are urging all residents — regardless of vaccination status — to mask up again in indoor public settings to help contain the coronavirus.

Over the past week, 61 new virus cases have been reported in the county, a staggering total that isn't expected to slow down in the foreseeable future.

As of Monday, the county's case rate per 100,000 people over the past 14 days was 335, the highest it's been in more than three months and on pace to become the second-biggest wave of cases the county has faced during the pandemic, trailing only last year's winter surge.

In all, 1,186 virus cases have been reported in the county and 47 people have been hospitalized. And in back-to-back weeks, a county resident has died from complications due to COVID-19, bringing the toll to 15.

Since March, 94% of county cases have occurred in people who were not fully vaccinated.

"The COVID-19 vaccines continue to be highly effective at preventing severe illness that can lead to hospitalization and death, even among those infected with the delta variant," the county's Public Health and Human Services Department said in a statement. "A small proportion of people who are fully vaccinated may still get COVID-19, but infections in fully vaccinated people tend to be mild."

— *Chinook Observer*

County requires masks at county buildings to contain virus

Clatsop County now requires people to wear masks in county buildings to protect against the coronavirus.

The requirement stems from a recent surge of virus cases and state and federal health guidance.

Gov. Kate Brown has required workers and visitors to wear masks at state buildings.

— *The Astorian*

DEATHS

Aug. 4, 2021
KERBER, Edward J., 84, of Warrenton, died at home of natural causes. A private burial is planned at Ocean View Cemetery in Warrenton. Caldwell's Luce Layton Mortuary of

Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

Aug. 2, 2021
CARTER, Shelley, 70, of Long Beach, Washington, died in Astoria. Hughes-Ransom Mortuary is in charge of the arrangements.

MEMORIAL

Monday, Aug. 9

BURKHART, Dorothy Marie — Memorial at 11 a.m., Greenwood Cemetery, 91569 Oregon Highway 202. Young's Funeral Home in Tigard is in charge of the arrangements.

ON THE RECORD

Assault

• Peter William McGaughey, 48, of Astoria, was sentenced Thursday to more than five years in prison for assault in the second degree and six months for tampering with physical evidence. The sentences run concurrently, and McGaughey received credit for time served. He committed the crimes in October.

• Joshua Wyatt Raniero, 29, of Gearhart, was indicted July 29 for assault in the third degree, assault in the fourth degree constituting domestic violence, three counts of recklessly endangering another person and driving under the influence of intoxicants.

• Wayne Hoksila Cannon, 19, of Seaside, was indicted July 29 for assault in the second degree, assault in the third degree, unlawful use of a weapon and criminal mischief in the second degree.

• Xavier Daniel Lumadue, 24, of Astoria, was indicted July 29 for assault in the second degree, assault in the third degree, unlawful use of a weapon and criminal mischief in the second degree.

• Jordan Lee Ailshie, 53, of Seaside, was indicted July 13 for assaulting a public safety officer, resisting arrest and disorderly conduct in the second degree.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY

Warrenton City Commission and Parks Advisory Board, 4 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

TUESDAY

Cannon Beach City Council, 6 p.m., work session, City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Lewis & Clark Fire Department, 6 p.m., main fire station, 34571 U.S. Highway 101 Business.

Warrenton City Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

the Astorian

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Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Riley Phillips plays with her dog, 'Willow,' in the shallows of Youngs River on Wednesday afternoon.

The delta variant is breaking records and 'clobbering' Oregon

By ERIN ROSS and AMELIA TEMPLETON
Oregon Public Broadcasting

One hundred thirty three — that's the number of Oregonians in hospital intensive care units battling COVID-19, according to official numbers out this week.

That's the highest it's been in the last eight months, and just 10 people fewer than the highest number of ICU patients all pandemic, set when COVID-19 peaked in December. In southern Oregon, the records set over the winter are being broken this summer.

Dr. Renee Edwards, the chief medical officer at OHSU Health, said that in large measure the people she's seeing in the hospital are unvaccinated. Many are sick with the more contagious delta variant.

The delta variant has been blamed for a recent surge in COVID-19 cases across the country, with many states posting record-high case counts. While vaccines protect people from catching COVID-19 and getting seriously ill, the delta variant has undone all the progress vaccines made at slowing transmission of the virus.

And the patients falling ill with the delta variant are younger than in past waves. They seem to get sicker, faster, and appear more likely to get seriously ill. It's no longer a disease that just hospitalizes the old.

"Patients who are presenting with this delta variant who are being hospitalized do tend to be sicker and more likely to require ICU level care," Edwards said.

Since the pandemic started, doctors treating COVID-19 have learned how to treat patients and how to keep them out of the ICU. That means that once patients are admitted to an ICU, they are extremely sick.

"PTSD is common in this

Astoria parks employee tests positive for virus

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

An Astoria Parks and Recreation Department employee tested positive for the coronavirus, city leaders announced Friday.

Further details about the person's condition were not available. It is the third coronavirus case city officials have reported this year and the second to come from the parks department, which includes a number of facilities and services, including multiple public parks, the Astoria Aquatic Center and the Lil' Sprouts day care.

So far, the positive case has not impacted city operations or facilities, City Manager Brett Estes said. It is not related to another positive case from the parks department in July.

The city's first confirmed coronavirus case was in April, when a public works employee

tested positive.

The third case comes as concerns rise about the more contagious delta variant of the virus.

Astoria has not required employees to get vaccinated, though it has encouraged them to get the shot and allowed for time off if needed, Estes said. City Hall is once again allowing people to come into the building to access services and in-person public meetings have resumed.

But, in light of Gov. Kate Brown's announcement requiring masks at state buildings and a recent announcement by Clatsop County requiring visitors to wear masks when conducting in-person business at county offices, Estes said the city is reviewing its policies.

"What I can say is we're not looking at closing any facilities or making any changes like that which would limit service," Estes said.

patient population, because they're drowning in the air," said Sabra Bederka, an ICU nurse at Providence in Portland. "They literally cannot get air into their lungs, no matter how hard they try, no matter how hard we try. And they're terrified. It's a panic situation."

Then it's on nurses to calm the panicking patients down

gered every time they become short of breath.

Before delta, COVID-19 was a disease that took its time. Patients would be sick for a week or two weeks before they required hospitalization.

Not any longer. "Now, it's this, 'I started feeling sick two days ago,' and now they're in the hospital," Bederka said. "It's clobbering them, quickly and mercilessly."

Bederka said she's losing "too many" people. And many of them are young — even in their 20s and 30s.

"They're my age and younger, and they're still not making it. And they're leaving families and young children behind."

Physical recovery can take a long time.

"We can't fix you," Bederka said. "We can treat you, but we can't cure you. You have to cure yourself. It's a waiting game: It's seeing how much your body can recover from the damage that has already been done by this virus."

Southern Oregon's Jackson and Josephine counties have reported the highest numbers of infections and hospitalizations since the pandemic began.

"We are in a bad place for our public health and health care infrastructure, and for the health of our community," Jackson County Health Officer Dr. Jim Shames said. "Our public health and health care systems are nearing capacity, at capacity or have surpassed it."

Asante Health said its three hospitals are at capacity. They are no longer performing elective surgeries and are not accepting transfer patients from other hospitals that normally send patients in need of critical care.

In addition, Asante is unable to discharge patients to long-term care, because those facilities are full as well.

"We're boarding about 60 patients a day who no longer need hospital-level care, but there are no open LTCs to discharge them to," said Asante spokeswoman Lauren Van Sickle.

and reassure them.

"It's terrifying for us, because we're in the middle of it," Bederka said.

She said that after recovery, some patients are trig-

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