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Hospital cancels elective surgeries

Columbia Memorial's announcement comes as virus cases grow

By GRIFFIN REILLY
The Astorian

Columbia Memorial Hospital will cancel elective surgeries to free up beds for coronavirus patients as virus cases and hospitalizations rise across Oregon.

The 25-bed Astoria hospital had eight virus cases in house as of Friday morning and was not experiencing an immediate shortage, but made the decision in anticipation of a surge in the coming days, according to Nancee Long, the hospital's director of communications.

"We've seen teenagers here. This is no longer just a concern for the elderly or the immune-deficient," she said.

Oregon Health & Science University has estimated Oregon will be short by as many as 500 hospital beds and the state will have about 1,100 people hospitalized with COVID-19 by early September.

Oregon broke pandemic records for hospitalizations this week as the delta variant drove virus case counts higher. As of Friday, 733 people were hospitalized. Gov. Kate

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State discloses outbreak at care home

Four virus cases reported at Clatsop Care facility

By GRIFFIN REILLY
The Astorian

The Oregon Health Authority disclosed four coronavirus cases at Clatsop Care Health & Rehabilitation.

The virus cases, contained in the health authority's weekly outbreak report, were reported Aug. 7.

Three of the virus cases were among staff members, according to Clarissa Johnson, a Clatsop Care administrator, while one involved a resident.

The resident, who is believed to have come in contact with the virus from a family member who had visited the facility on 16th Street in Astoria, has been moved to a coronavirus-only care facility in Tigard.

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New framing business opens at RiverSea Gallery

By GRIFFIN REILLY
The Astorian

Visitors to RiverSea Gallery may notice a new addition.

Monarch Muse Design & Frame — an independent custom framing shop started by Leann Rund — opened within the Commercial Street gallery in July. The shop offers design advice, original art and custom-built frames, shadow boxes and more.

For many interested in framing, Rund may already be a familiar name. Shortly

after moving to Astoria in 1987, Rund started working at the Old Town Framing Co., where she offered much of the same design advice and hand-crafted framing that she'll continue on her own with Monarch Muse.

"I love framing and it's a great job," Rund said. "Usually people are very happy when they're getting something framed. You don't encounter a lot of grumpy people when you're framing."

Though many of her customers, friends and family had long urged Rund to start her own business, she wanted to wait until she could find the right shared space that would allow her to regularly



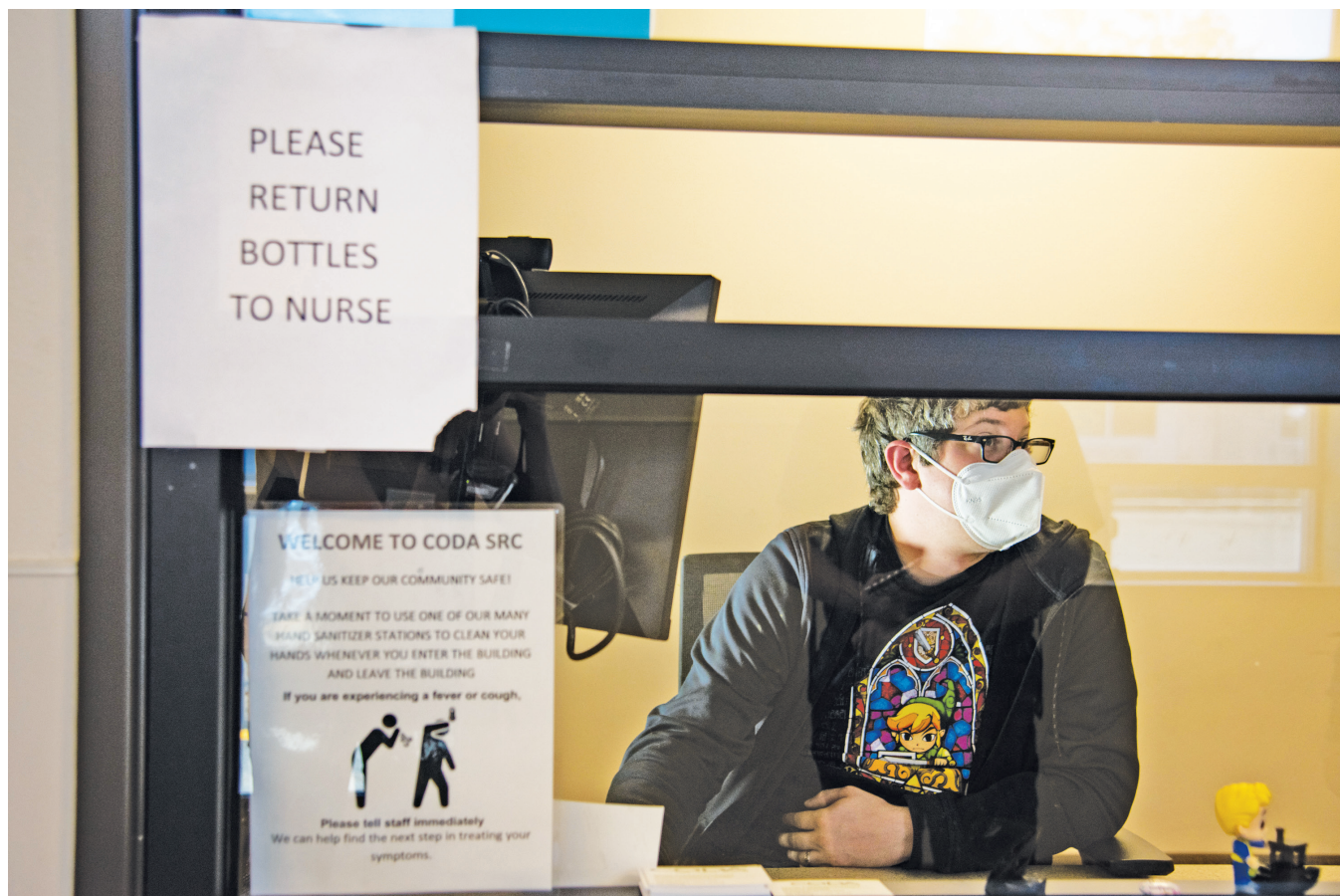
Leann Rund stretches out a sign for her framing business on her work table in the back of RiverSea Gallery.

interact with clientele of an already-existing gallery.

Rund's longtime friendship with RiverSea owner

Jeannine Grafton served as a gateway for the perfect

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Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

John Bisson, a registered nurse, sits behind the glass at his station where patients receive methadone and other medications at the Seaside Recovery Center.

Amid pandemic adjustments, clinics use medicine to manage opioid addiction

By ERICK BENDEL
The Astorian

In the last week of January 2020, the Seaside Recovery Center, a clinic that uses methadone and other medication to treat people with opioid addiction, opened in the city's south end.

Less than two months later, the clinic had to rethink how to care for patients, as did Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare's clinic in Warrenton's Premarq Center.

Quietly operating in nondescript buildings where their services aren't outwardly advertised, both clinics provide medication-assisted treatment for opioid abuse. The medication — methadone and Suboxone in Seaside; just Suboxone in Warrenton — does not replace the euphoric experience of opioids like heroin, but works to suppress cravings and withdrawal.

Medication-assisted treatment is rooted in the idea that addiction is best seen as a chronic illness rather than a moral failing, said Alison Noice, the executive director of CODA, the Portland-based treatment provider that runs the Seaside facility.

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, the clinics had to rapidly adjust to a world where a setting based on closeness of care could itself become a health risk.

The Seaside clinic dispenses methadone, a heavily regulated pain reliever. Federal rules are strict about how the drug can be given to patients, down to how often patients need to check in and make direct contact with a nurse. Historically, patients in the early stages of treatment have needed to visit the clinic six times a week, often for months, if not years, before being allowed to leave the clinic with methadone, Noice said.

These rules held for decades, even as methadone clinics became more sophisticated in their care and their services more robust.



The Seaside Recovery Center distributes methadone in small plastic cups for patients to take.

"Some — I think rightly — over time have come to feel like those rules were very, very restrictive, if not almost punitive," Noice said. "But it's been very difficult to get the federal regulations to change in any way."

Then came COVID-19 and the need for more flexibility.

More freedom

Federal and state authorities and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration came together — "which, honestly, I've never seen them do this way before," Noice said — and agreed on two things: Patients would, for the most part, have to stay out of clinics, and the pandemic could not be allowed to interrupt their medications.

So the feds began to grant clinics like Seaside Recovery Center the freedom to determine whether patients could be trusted to take medicine home with them — to not sell, abuse or otherwise mis-

handle it — and how often that person should have to visit the clinic. A patient who had been dropping by daily could now do so weekly.

"We actually got to make those decisions based on what we knew about the patient, and not necessarily just based on what these very old rules told us we had to do," Noice said.

One upshot is that Seaside patients missed out on a key part of their treatment: group counseling. The clinic tried to hold electronic sessions, but individual phone calls between counselors and patients proved more successful.

Addiction treatment relies on peer groups; recovery involves building a network that supports a person's sobriety, Noice said. For about a month and a half, the few Seaside patients met in the group therapy room, but a strong cohort — the desired number is between 8 and 12,

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Homeless strategy takes form in Seaside

City hopes for details by end of October

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

SEASIDE — After public forums, meetings with city department heads, a listening session, formation of a task force and think tank, the City Council is ready to take the next steps to address homelessness.

In July, Clatsop Community Action housing liaisons Cheryl Paul and Jody Anderson went into

the field for about 19 days. "We had 265 encounters with unsheltered people," Paul said at a City Council meeting on Monday. "We average around 13 or 14 people per day."

Over 1,000 people are homeless in Clatsop County, said Viviana Matthews, the executive director of Clatsop Community Action.

About 35% to 40% of homeless services in the county are focused in Seaside.

The nonprofit agency matches people to social

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