

# Lawmaker wants all CCOs to be nonprofits

By SHERRI BURI MCDONALD  
The Register-Guard

EUGENE — State and federal regulators aren't concerned that the owners of a private Eugene company that managed health services for needy Lane County residents reaped millions in profits last year when they sold the company to a large, out-of-state corporation.

But some Oregon legislators are.

"I don't believe we should have investor-owned corporations doing (coordinated care organizations)," said Rep. Mitch Greenlick, D-Portland, chairman of the House Health Committee. "They should all be nonprofit organizations, and they shouldn't be able to be sold that way."

CCOs — either for-profit or nonprofit — manage health services for patients covered by the Oregon Health Plan. The Oregon Health Plan is Oregon's version of Medicaid, the taxpayer-funded health plan for low-income and disabled U.S. citizens.

The CCO in Lane County is Trillium Community Health Plan, and last year its parent company, Agate Resources, sold itself to Missouri-based Centene Corp., creating a windfall for Agate shareholders.

Greenlick wants to protect taxpayer money and prevent such a sale from happening again. So he plans to reintroduce

a bill that he withdrew earlier this year that would require all Oregon CCOs to be nonprofit corporations by 2024.

The bill also would require CCOs' hefty reserves to be kept in a special escrow fund at the Oregon Treasury. The state requires CCOs to keep large reserves to guard against risks, including higher-than-projected claims.

"We shouldn't have those millions of dollars going to stockholders that are basically state money," Greenlick said.

It remains to be seen whether Greenlick and his allies can muster enough political support to radically change course for Oregon's CCOs. But Greenlick insists it must be done.

"The problem is we structured (CCOs) the wrong way," he said.

The Legislature in 2011 was under pressure to pass the bill that created the CCOs to receive a \$1.9 billion advance from the federal government to establish a new way of managing care for Oregon Health Plan patients, Greenlick said. Because of the need for compromise, "we left a lot of ambiguity in the statute," he said. Greenlick said he has asked the nine-member Oregon Health

Policy Board, which oversees the Oregon Health Authority, to make recommendations about CCOs.

"They've agreed to do that," Greenlick said, adding that he has asked for a report by Jan. 1, with preliminary information in October.

To gather information to help formulate those recommendations, the Oregon Health Policy Board will hold community meetings this month and next in Bend, Tillamook, Medford, Eugene, Hermiston and Portland.

Launched in 2012, CCOs set out to improve the health of Oregon Health Plan patients at lower cost through more preventive care, better coordination of services and financial rewards to providers who help their patients stay well.

A CCO enrolls patients and the state gives the CCO an amount per patient per month to cover physical, mental, dental and behavioral health services, plus run the CCO and make a profit.

The state monitors CCOs' finances, capacity to enroll additional patients and service quality, Oregon Health Authority officials said.

Overall, Oregon's CCOs appear to be functioning as intended, said Neal Wallace, a Portland State University public administration professor.

"They're providing reasonably good services," he said. "They're managing to do that within the budget they have."

But Greenlick has put his finger on the tension in Oregon about how CCOs should be structured and monitored, Wallace said.

"He's responding to a real issue," Wallace said. "It's something that has to be paid attention to."

"The state has to look at this and ask, 'What are we doing here?'" he said. "How do we want CCOs to run, and how do we protect our interest?"

That could mean restricting the corporate forms of CCOs, Wallace said. "There's an array of creative solutions as long as you've got your eyeball on what you're trying to prevent," Wallace said.

Allowing investors to put private money into CCOs "could be a good thing," he said. "But it needs to be controlled in a way that they can't just suck profits out of the CCO."

**"We shouldn't have those millions of dollars going to stockholders that are basically state money."**

— Rep. Mitch Greenlick, D-Portland, chairman of the House Health Committee

# Walla Walla police investigate three OD deaths

By SHEILA HAGAR  
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

Officials are awaiting lab tests to determine causes of three deaths attributed to drug overdoses last week, according to the Walla Walla Police Department.

"While lab results are pending, it is highly likely the deaths were caused from injecting heroin that was either laced with another powerful depressant, or was in a very pure form," police spokesman Tim Bennett said in a news release.

Without toxicology reports, officials cannot be completely certain what caused the overdoses, but heroin laced with fentanyl has been seen in past Walla Walla area deaths, Detective Matt Wood said Tuesday.

The first of the three overdoses was the death of Whitman College junior Josh Fishman on Wednesday. Walla Walla County Coroner Richard Greenwood said this morning Fishman, 20, had a history of prescription drug abuse before attending Whitman last year.

The campus newspaper reported Fishman was from New Jersey and over the summer had worked as a surgical intern at Baylor College of Medicine. At Whitman, he had been taking pre-med and sociology courses.

The other two deaths were reported Friday. Officials as of this morning had not released their identities pending notification of family.

One was a 20-year-old male who was found dead at Koncrete Industries, 502 N. 13th Ave., at about 1:30 p.m. near the warehouse. He was found with a drug kit containing a syringe nearby, Greenwood said.

Employees at Koncrete Industries had seen the man walking around and eventually lying down on the ground. The spot attracts people living in homelessness and it is not unusual for people to sit on the nearby railroad tracks or take naps in the immediate area, noted one employee, who declined to give his name.

The employee estimated the victim had been on the ground about 20 minutes before he was discovered to be dead.

The second death Friday was a 68-year-old Milton-Freewater woman who was found unconscious from drug use and resuscitated, then taken to Providence St. Mary Medical Center where she later died, Greenwood said Tuesday.

Autopsies for the Walla Walla man and Milton-Freewater woman were planned for Tuesday.

# State agency that accredits pot labs on verge of 'collapse'

SALEM (AP) — As Oregon officials struggle to license all sectors of the recreational marijuana industry before the end of the year, a top official of the agency that accredits labs that test pot says it is overwhelmed — a situation that could derail the rollout.

Gary K. Ward, administrator of the Oregon Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program, emailed dozens of labs awaiting licenses, saying his agency's abilities to accredit them is "on the precipice of collapse ... because of the lack of resources and the last minute rush of cannabis labs with applications."

He said in his Aug. 26 email that he had asked for three full-time employees to handle cannabis testing lab accreditation, and received none.

Only three labs have been

accredited to test cannabis by Ward's agency, known as ORELAP.

If labs aren't accredited, then marijuana growers and extractors won't be able to have products tested to be put on the market — which Oregon voters legalized in a November 2014 ballot measure — and retailers will have bare shelves. Many retailers are also awaiting licenses from the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.

"This has been extremely worrisome for the industry," Donald Morse, director of the Oregon Cannabis Business Council, said in a phone interview with The Associated Press. "I have spoken with people in all agencies ... and we've warned them for months this bottleneck was coming because of their inability get these accreditations done."

The Oregon Department of Revenue reported that as of July 31, it has processed \$25.5 million in marijuana tax payments this year. New rules require testing by an accredited lab.

"The tax revenue will go from that to zero if we have no product to sell," Morse said.

Medical marijuana dispensaries are selling to both patients and so-called recreational users, but after the end of this year they won't be allowed to sell to recreational users. Retail shops will sell to them, but only products that have been tested by accredited labs for pesticides and other impurities, and for potency. Medical marijuana is required to be tested but the labs previously did not need to be accredited.

Jeremy Sackett, co-founder of Cascadia Labs, said he is

awaiting accreditation and that an inspection by ORELAP is scheduled for next week. The company has one lab in the Portland area and another in Bend.

"It would be unfortunate if the State were not able to support and effectively implement the well-developed regulations that have been enacted," Sackett told AP in an email.

The Oregon Health Authority, which oversees ORELAP, said Tuesday in response to Ward's warning that it is committed to taking steps to ensure environmental laboratory accreditation "even with growing demand."

"Labs play a critical role in ensuring public health and OHA will find a solution to the challenges that the short-term increase in cannabis testing lab requests has caused," the health authority said.

# EAST OREGONIAN

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Production Manager: Mike Jensen  
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## AccuWeather.com Forecast

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Pleasant and warmer	Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny and pleasant	Plenty of sunshine	Sunny and beautiful
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
75° 53°	76° 44°	78° 51°	88° 55°	74° 44°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
80° 56°	80° 42°	80° 44°	89° 58°	78° 42°

### ALMANAC

#### PENDLETON

through 3 p.m. yesterday

#### TEMPERATURE

HIGH	LOW
Yesterday 60°	53°
Normals 82°	53°
Records 102° (1955)	34° (1898)

#### PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.33"
Month to date	0.35"
Normal month to date	0.09"
Year to date	7.74"
Last year to date	5.66"
Normal year to date	8.51"

#### HERMISTON

through 3 p.m. yesterday

#### TEMPERATURE

HIGH	LOW
Yesterday 67°	56°
Normals 82°	52°
Records 99° (2003)	39° (1961)

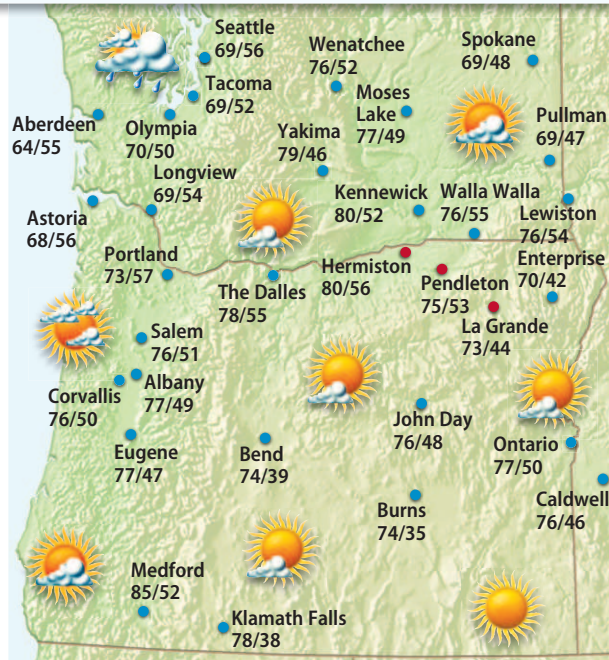
#### PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.36"
Month to date	0.41"
Normal month to date	0.07"
Year to date	5.40"
Last year to date	3.43"
Normal year to date	6.22"

#### SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	6:24 a.m.
Sunset tonight	7:21 p.m.
Moonrise today	12:32 p.m.
Moonset today	10:42 p.m.

First	Full	Last	New
Sep 9	Sep 16	Sep 23	Sep 30



### REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: Clouds and sun today. A passing shower across the north tonight.

Eastern and Central Oregon: Mostly sunny and nice today; warmer. Clear tonight. Mostly sunny and nice tomorrow.

Western Washington: Clouds breaking today with a stray shower in the afternoon.

Eastern Washington: Times of sun and clouds today. Partly cloudy tonight. Partly sunny tomorrow.

Cascades: Partly sunny and warmer today. Clear to partly cloudy tonight. Mostly sunny tomorrow.

Northern California: Patchy low clouds early today, then mostly sunny; pleasant at the coast.

### REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Thu.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	68	56	pc	69	52	pc
Baker City	72	36	s	74	30	pc
Bend	74	39	s	76	40	pc
Brookings	69	52	s	72	53	pc
Burns	74	35	s	77	30	pc
Enterprise	70	42	s	70	37	pc
Eugene	77	47	pc	79	44	pc
Heppner	75	48	s	74	39	s
Hermiston	80	56	s	80	42	s
John Day	76	48	s	77	43	s
Klamath Falls	78	38	s	80	39	s
La Grande	73	44	s	74	34	pc
Meacham	70	42	s	69	33	pc
Medford	85	52	s	88	50	s
Newport	63	50	pc	63	47	pc
North Bend	67	52	pc	67	49	pc
Ontario	77	50	s	80	46	s
Pasco	79	51	pc	80	42	s
Pendleton	75	53	s	76	44	s
Portland	73	57	pc	73	50	pc
Redmond	77	38	s	77	34	s
Salem	76	51	pc	77	47	pc
Spokane	69	48	pc	70	44	pc
Ukiah	71	40	s	70	36	s
Vancouver	71	55	pc	73	47	pc
Walla Walla	76	55	s	76	49	pc
Yakima	79	46	pc	79	42	s

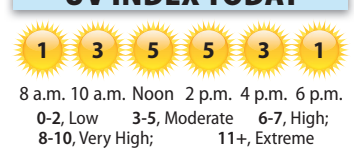
### WORLD CITIES

	Today			Thu.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	89	63	s	90	62	s
Hong Kong	86	79	t	87	81	t
Jerusalem	81	64	s	82	67	s
London	83	59	pc	73	59	s
Mexico City	74	52	t	74	47	pc
Moscow	63	57	c	64	48	c
Paris	82	56	s	80	52	s
Rome	82	63	t	81	64	t
Seoul	85	66	pc	83	65	pc
Sydney	71	57	pc	72	57	s
Tokyo	84	79	r	85	75	r

### WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Thursday
Boardman	WSW 6-12	WSW 6-12
Pendleton	WSW 7-14	WSW 7-14

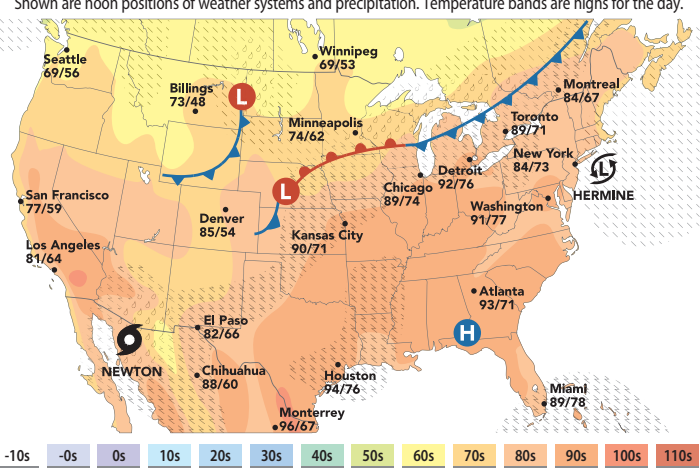
### UV INDEX TODAY



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### NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.



National Summary: Strong thunderstorms will stretch from Kansas to Iowa and Wisconsin today. Flooding rain will hit eastern Arizona and western New Mexico. Mainly dry conditions will prevail elsewhere across the country.