

CORONAVIRUS

How Oregonians in recovery are dealing with pandemic

By **LIZZY ACKER**
The Oregonian

PORTLAND — As treatment centers close and public gatherings are prohibited to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus, Oregon’s recovering addicts are navigating an increasingly difficult path of sobriety.

Recovery is, for many people, a social endeavor, said Mike Marshall, the executive director of Oregon Recovers.

“From the very beginning,” he said, “it’s all built around being in community and supporting each other.”

According to Marshall, before coronavirus, the state was already at a crisis point in terms of addiction.

“Oregon has the third-highest addiction rate in the country,” he said, “and we’re now 47th in access to treatment according to (the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration).”

Social distancing means treatment centers are forced to close, he said, and group meetings have been shut down.

“When I found out my mom died, I had just celebrated one year clean and



A group of men in recovery are isolated together at the Blanchet House Farm in Carlton.

sober,” said Tera Hurst, who is 23 years sober. “The first place I went was to a meeting where everyone lined around the room to give me a hug and their number.”

“I survived because I had those rooms and people to support me,” added Hurst, a candidate for Portland City Council. “I am not sure if I could have stayed clean during that time without seeing and being with

my community.”

Other elements of people’s recovery, things like yoga and one-on-one counseling, are also no longer available.

“You can do counseling on Skype,” Marshall said, “but it’s just not the same thing.”

“We had a crisis already,” he said. “Now what limited infrastructure we have is quickly evaporating.”

Older people and lower-income or no-income people who don’t have access to technology, along with non-English speakers and people in rural communities, will have a harder time finding the resources they need.

Oregon Recovers has an extensive list of online meetings for people who need to get plugged into a group.

And there are two hotlines — Lines for Life at 1-800-273-8255, and Oregon Warmline at 1-800-698-2392.

For a lucky few, social isolation is happening as a group. One group of 16 men at the Blanchet House Farm in Carlton are weathering the shutdown in relatively good spirits.

“We’re lucky,” said Bill Gilmer, 59, who has been in recovery for alcohol abuse off and on since 2016. “For me to stay sober, I need my meetings and I need my faith. Those two together have done for me what I could not do for myself.”

Gilmer acknowledges people living outside a community like this and trying to get sober aren’t so lucky.

Ross Sears, 53, the manager of the farm, who has been sober since

2008, agrees.

As meetings shut down, Sears said his biggest fear for someone newly in recovery was they couldn’t find the help they needed. And without access to meetings, their new routine could be upended.

“For me,” Sears said, “it would have been right back to the other routine I had: drinking.”

Sears said the lack of help and the new pressure of the pandemic would be hard on people in recovery.

“Alcoholics and addicts drink or use for reasons,” he said. “We try to justify stuff.”

“With all this stuff going haywire,” Sears added, “they can kind of talk themselves into, ‘Hey, what the heck?’”

Marshall pointed out that these vulnerable people will also now have more access to alcohol. On Thursday, the Oregon Liquor Control Commission relaxed rules to help the hospitality industry to allow for curbside pickup of malt beverages, wine and cider, as well as extending the hours of same-day alcohol delivery to 2:30 a.m.

While acknowledging that this might help the economy, Marshall called it a “terrible, terrible” idea.

Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY

A few afternoon showers

WEDNESDAY

Partly sunny and cool

THURSDAY

Increasing cloudiness

FRIDAY

Cloudy with a couple of showers

SATURDAY

Mostly cloudy

PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST									
55°	35°	52°	33°	54°	36°	55°	40°	58°	40°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST									
60°	37°	58°	35°	59°	39°	60°	43°	63°	44°

OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2020

ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	57°	42°
Normals	57°	37°
Records	74° (1960)	20° (1904)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.

0.00"

Month to date	0.61"
Normal month to date	1.02"
Year to date	4.67"
Last year to date	5.38"
Normal year to date	3.57"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	58°	45°
Normals	60°	36°
Records	79° (1940)	19° (2013)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.

0.00"

Month to date	0.12"
Normal month to date	0.69"
Year to date	0.48"
Last year to date	3.49"
Normal year to date	2.96"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Wed.
Boardman	WSW 7-14	WSW 6-12
Pendleton	WSW 7-14	W 7-14

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	6:50 a.m.
Sunset tonight	7:13 p.m.
Moonrise today	7:26 a.m.
Moonset today	7:39 p.m.

New

First

Full

Last

Mar 24

Apr 1

Apr 7

Apr 14

Rights groups: coronavirus treatment plan discriminates

By **MARTHA BELLISLE**
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Rights groups in Washington state filed a complaint on Monday with federal health officials claiming plans developed by the state health department and University of Washington Medical Center for rationing life-saving equipment and treatments while responding to the coronavirus outbreak discriminates against disabled people.

The protocols will guide health professionals in deciding on who will have access to life-saving treatment and who will die, the complaint said. And the latest plan puts disabled people at risk, said the complaint filed with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

“The plans were just released on Friday and we need the Office of Civil Rights to weigh in before the plans are actually used as there is no way to reverse

a denial of life-saving treatment after the fact,” David Carlson, director of advocacy with Disabilities Rights Washington told the Associated Press on Monday.

Messages sent to state health officials seeking comment on the complaint were not immediately returned.

Health care professionals are working on protocols for responding to COVID-19 as they face the likelihood that they won’t have enough medical equipment, such as ventilators, to treat people being hospitalized for the disease.

The complaint says the Washington State Department of Health and the Northwest Healthcare Response Network, a coalition of hospitals, plans to access a patient’s age, health and the chances that they’ll survive the disease when deciding who will get treatment and who will receive comfort care.

The health department sent out guidance last week

that recommends teams consider sending patients with “loss of reserves in energy, physical ability, cognition and general health” to outpatient or palliative care, the complaint said. The flow charts give priority to people who are younger and healthier, leaving older people and those with disabilities to die.

“Any plan that discriminates against people with disabilities in this way violates the legal rights of people with disabilities and is unlawful,” the complaint said.

They’re asking the Office of Civil Rights to step in to ensure everyone is treated fairly and legally.

“Guidance is needed within hours or days, not weeks or months given that Washington is at the epicenter of the U.S. epidemic — the pandemic is spreading at a rapid pace, and the number of confirmed cases and deaths is climbing each day,” the complaint said.

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 96° in Falfurrias, Texas Low -11° in Clayton Lake, Maine

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

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

-10s

-0s

0s

10s

20s

30s

40s

50s

60s

70s

80s

90s

100s

110s

showers

t-storms

rain

flurries

snow

ice

cold front

warm front

stationary front

high

low

BRIEFLY

More than 5 dozen Idaho residents confirmed to have COVID-19

BOISE, Idaho — With more than five dozen confirmed cases of the coronavirus in Idaho on Monday, agencies, businesses and schools continued to work to slow the spread of the illness.

Boise State University urged students to move away from dormitory-style housing if they can, and like the University of Idaho, Idaho State University and other higher education institutions across Idaho, has moved all classes online.

Officials with the West Ada Public Schools District, the largest in the state, is working on a remote learning plan in case schools need to be closed for an extended period.

Central District Health, which serves the Boise region, on Sunday asked any Ada County residents who have recently traveled to Ketchum, Sun Valley, Hailey or surrounding areas to shelter in place for two weeks, and health officials in Eastern Idaho asked residents who traveled to the same area to call for further instructions. The towns are all in Blaine County, which has at least 35 confirmed cases of COVID-19, the illness caused by the coronavirus. The entire county was placed under a shelter-in-place order by Idaho Gov. Brad Little last week.

There are at least 65 people confirmed to have COVID-19 statewide.

— EO Media Group

CORRECTIONS: The *East Oregonian* works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

EAST OREGONIAN

— Founded Oct. 16, 1875 —

211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton 541-276-2211

333 E. Main St., Hermiston 541-567-6211

Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Closed major holidays

EastOregonian.com

To subscribe, call 1-800-522-0255

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East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published daily except Sunday,

Monday and postal holidays, by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers

Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801. Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR.

Postmaster: send address changes to

East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801.

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13 weeks	\$47.77	36 percent

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Single copy price:

\$1.50 Tuesday through Saturday

Circulation Dept.

800-781-3214

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