

Little risk level change as Oregon nears vaccination goal

By GARY A. WARNER
Oregon Capital Bureau



Kristyna Wentz-Graff/Oregon Public Broadcasting, File
Gov. Kate Brown tours a drive-thru mass COVID-19 vaccination clinic at Portland International Airport on April 9, 2021.

SALEM — Most Oregonians will see no change this week to local COVID-19 risk level restrictions as 30 counties retained their current tiers, Gov. Kate Brown said Tuesday, June 8.

But if about 100,000 more residents get vaccinated, the whole system of do's and don'ts would go away.

"If you have been waiting to get vaccinated, go get your shot today," Brown said. "It's never been easier to get an appointment."

The new weekly COVID-19 risk rankings released showed five counties moving down a level, with just one rising.

Lane, Coos and Wasco counties dropped to lower risk, the least restrictive category. Yamhill and Josephine counties will drop to moderate level.

The changes in the five counties will go into effect June 9, sooner than in some previous risk level

announcements in prior weeks.

Harney was the only county to move into a more restrictive level. It will be at moderate risk effective Friday, June 11.

All other counties remain at their current levels until at least June 17. There will be 21 counties at the lower risk level, four at moderate risk, and 11 at the high risk level. The higher the risk level, the more restrictions

meant to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Brown has shifted the emphasis on risk level assignments to include how well a county is doing in vaccinating residents.

Counties that can show they had administered at least one shot to 65% of eligible adult residents are allowed to drop to the lower risk level regardless of infection rates in their county.

Most Oregon residents

COUNTY RISK CATEGORIES

Effective through June 17

Lower Risk (21)	Multnomah	Polk
Baker	Sherman	Yamhill (Moved from High)
Benton	Tillamook	High Risk (11)
Clatsop	Union	Clackamas
Coos (Moved from Moderate)	Wallowa	Columbia
Curry	Wasco (Moved from Moderate)	Crook
Deschutes	Washington	Douglas
Gilliam	Wheeler	Jackson
Grant	Moderate Risk (4)	Jefferson
Hood River	Harney (Moved from Lower)	Klamath
Lake	Josephine	Linn
Lane (Moved from Moderate)	(Moved from High)	Malheur
Lincoln		Marion
Morrow		Umatilla

70% of all eligible state residents have at least one shot of vaccine, she'll lift nearly all restrictions on businesses, schools, events and restaurants.

Late June 8, Brown touted that 67.1% of eligible adult Oregonians had received at least a shot.

"We need 97,168 more people to get their shot," she wrote on Twitter. Like many states, Oregon is offering prizes for those inoculated. One person will receive \$1 million, while one person in each of the 36 counties will get \$10,000. The state is also offering five \$100,000 Oregon College Savings Plan scholarships to vaccinated youths.

The drawing will take place June 28, with winners announced the following week. Anyone in the state's vaccination registration system by midnight June 27 is eligible.

The next set of risk level revisions will be announced June 15 and will be in effect from Friday, June 18, to Thursday, June 24.

have been inoculated with the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, which are administered in two shots separated by about one month. Those receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine receive just one shot.

Deschutes, Multnomah, Washington, Benton, Lincoln and Hood River have all surpassed the 65% threshold.

Lane County is at 64%.

Clackamas, Polk, Tillamook and Clatsop are above 60%.

The four lowest county vaccination rates are Lake, Malheur, Umatilla and Gilliam, with each having administered one shot to 39% or less of residents.

Union County's vaccination rate is just 43%, while Wallowa County is 54.7%, according to the Oregon Health Authority website.

Brown has said when

Bill to expand protections for gender identity clears Oregon Senate

By SAM STITES
Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — House Bill 3041 separates definition of "gender identity" from "sexual orientation" and adds it to state laws addressing protections against discrimination.

A bill seeking to provide further protections for Oregonians based on gender identity is headed to the desk of Oregon Gov. Kate Brown following a 21-8 bipartisan vote in the Senate on Monday, June 7.

House Bill 3041, which was approved 52-0 by the House in April, amends Oregon statute to separate the definitions of gender identity and sexual orienta-

tion, and adds "gender identity" to all laws referencing sexual orientation. That includes broadening provisions of state statute added by the 2007 Oregon Equality Act that made it illegal to discriminate based on the term "sexual orientation."

The new law defines "gender identity" as an individual's gender as it relates to their identity, appearance and behavior regardless of how that differs from a gender they were assigned at birth.

According to Sen. Kate Lieber, D-Beaverton, the purpose of the bill is to allow state law to take into consideration the nuances and differences between sexual orientation and gender identity, and to acknowledge

those differences. Lieber also noted that the bill resolves conflicts within HB 2534 regarding discriminatory language in governing documents of condominium and homeowner's associations by expanding protections to include gender identity.

'Male self-identified females'

The measure prompted several questions from senators and a nearly 30 minute discussion about the bill's potential impacts.

Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athens, rose to ask Lieber how the bill might impact school sports.

"How does this bill affect that if a male identifies as a female, a biological male

born that way as a female, are they allowed to compete in high school meets against women?" he asked.

Lieber said the law has more to do with acknowledging that Oregonians have the right to choose how they identify themselves and respecting that, no matter what gender they've been assigned.

"I do believe that it's important for all of us here to understand that a person who fully believes that they do not belong in the body they were assigned to at birth, that is a really real and difficult thing to do. And giving them every opportunity to express themselves in the body they feel that is theirs, even in athletics, is incredibly important

for their self esteem and how they feel about themselves," Lieber said. "So I would just say thank you for that question, but I believe we should be supporting these, many times younger people, who are making these very difficult decisions and really feel they're in the wrong body."

Hansell said he felt HB 3041 didn't address his concerns surrounding allowing "male self-identified females" to compete in female athletic competitions, and opposed the bill.

'The right thing to do'

Sen. James Manning Jr., D-Eugene, spoke in support of the bill, drawing on his experience as a drill sergeant in the United States Army

where he said he often saw women physically outwork and outperform men.

"This is more of, what is the right thing to do, versus a challenge about gender issues," Manning said.

Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, D-NW Portland, attempted to explain the tough decisions that families make raising children who have realized they've been assigned a gender that doesn't represent who they are as a person.

She also pointed out that as these situations become more prevalent, you will hear of the anecdotal events of someone born male who now identifies as female competing against women and "winning occasionally."

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