

# All Oregonians eligible for vaccine by July 1

Wallowa County residents in next group can begin signing up

By GARY A. WARNER  
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Every adult in Oregon will be offered a vaccination against COVID-19 by July 1, with the two-shot vaccines reaching all adults who want it by August, Gov. Kate Brown said Friday, Feb. 26.

“Come summer, any Oregonian who wants the vaccine can receive it,” Brown announced at a virtual press conference.

It was a surprisingly optimistic forecast after recent estimates that the vaccination of the entire state would stretch into autumn or even early 2022.

Group 6 eligibility, the next step in Phase 1B of immunization, begins March 29, when residents 45-64 with medical conditions that the Centers for

## ELIGIBILITY PRIORITIES FOR COVID-19 VACCINATION

### March 29: Phase 1B, Group 6

- Adults age 45 to 64 with underlying health conditions, as defined by the CDC
- Seasonal workers, such as migrant farm workers, seafood and agricultural workers, and food processing workers.
- Currently displaced victims of the September 2020 wildfires
- Wildland firefighters
- People living in low-income and congregate senior housing
- Homeless

### May 1: Phase 1B, Group 7

- Individuals age 16-45 with underlying health conditions
- All other frontline workers as defined by the CDC
- Multigenerational household members

### June 1: Phase 2, Group 1

- Adults 45 to 64

### July 1: Phase 2, Group 2

- Everyone age 16 and over

Disease Control and Prevention defines as making them more likely to become seriously ill or die if infected with COVID-19, can sign up. Conditions include Type 2 diabetes,

cancer, heart conditions, kidney disease, COPD, Down syndrome, compromised immune systems and sickle cell disease. Pregnancy is on the list, as is obesity that results in a

Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or more.

Residents should consult with their doctor and with the full explanation of qualifying conditions on the CDC and Oregon Health Authority websites.

Also eligible on March 29 are some farm and food industry workers, homeless people, residents of low-income or congregate housing, wildland firefighters and those displaced by the 2020 wildfires.

On May 1, those aged 16-44 with medical conditions on the CDC list can sign up. Also “frontline” workers with jobs dealing with the public, and any adult living in a multigenerational household.

Phase 2 begins with anyone over 45 eligible on June 1 and anyone over 16 on July 1.

No vaccine approved for children is available yet, though several are under development.

In Wallowa County, individuals who qualify for the vaccine as part of Group 6 were able to start calling

Wallowa Memorial Hospital on Monday, March 1, to get on the waitlist.

“Once we get into (vaccinating) Group 6, we will open the phone line for Group 7,” WMH Communications Director Brooke Pace said. “We imagine Group 6 is going to be a large number of people. We are going to open this up one group at a time.”

“When they call we will ask them a qualifying question. We will ask them what group they fall under, and if it is an underlying condition. It’s a pretty long list, but it’s not anything. It has to be an underlying health condition with extreme risk as identified by the CDC.”

Pace added that as long as there is vaccine on hand and everyone 65 and older who wants a vaccine has received one, they can move into initial inoculation of Group 6 individuals prior to March 29.

“The wording that they use on their sequencing is ‘eligible no later than,’” Pace said. “That allows us to move forward as long

as the group ahead of them has been addressed.”

Pace said another 300 doses of the vaccine are scheduled to be administered by the hospital on Friday, March 5, which would wrap up the 70-and-older group — with the exception of a few individuals who cannot get in that day — and start into the 65-and-up demographic.

As of last week, there were at least 1,233 first doses of the vaccine administered, Pace said, and 619 people who had been fully vaccinated. There currently are about 330 individuals on the 65-and-older waitlist and about 275 more scheduled for vaccination on the 70-and-up list.

An additional 400 second doses are slated to be administered March 9 and March 16, Pace said.

Those newly eligible who want a spot on the waitlist are encouraged to call 541-426-5437.

Wallowa County Chief-  
tain Editor Ronald Bond  
contributed to this report.

## COVID-19 closes Enterprise, Wallowa schools

A confirmed case within the district prompted Thursday’s closure

By RONALD BOND  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Enterprise and Wallowa school districts both were closed on Thursday, Feb. 25, after each posted on their Facebook pages late Wednesday night that they had a confirmed case of COVID-19 within the district.

The shutdown of the schools was short lived, as schools were allowing students back in the classroom Monday, March 1, following contact tracing and quarantining any students or staff determined to be in direct contact with the individual.

In almost identical posts, both districts said they were working with health authorities at the local and state levels. The districts provided cohort information and contact tracing logs to the health authorities and began deep cleaning the schools.

“I would say the key to stopping the spread and our response has really been

Dr. Liz Powers,” Wallowa Superintendent Tammy Jones said. “She is an amazing support for districts, and is there anytime day or night to help us through. We got the word late (on Wednesday night). It was a late night start in our communication. It’s gone really smooth.”

Nineteen individuals from Wallowa junior high and high school will be required to quarantine, and those students will study via comprehensive distance learning until March 11, a follow-up post stated, after they were determined to be in contact with the confirmed case.

“The exposures were short term in nature, but our country does take extra precautions to make sure we don’t create a spread,” Jones told the *Chieftain*. “Keeping our community healthy and safe is a priority.”

At the elementary school, second and sixth grades were able to return to the classroom Monday. Kindergarten, first-, third-, fourth- and fifth-grade students will be transferred to online learning until between March 9-11. Jones said the staggered return dates were set by Powers based on when the exposures happened in those grades.

“You go from the last potential exposure, you go 14 days from that,” Jones said.

In an update Friday morning, Enterprise Superintendent Erika Pinkerton posted that all students and staff who had direct contact had been contacted by local health authorities.

“This really has affected, primarily, the elementary,” Pinkerton told the *Chieftain*. “There is only one secluded cohort that

was exposed at the middle school/high school.”

Those students who returned to the elementary school in-person Monday were in two groups — a portion who returned to regular study, and a group that will meet in a one-room schoolhouse format.

Seven classes will move to online instruction for at least a week, and are slated to return between March 9-11.

At the middle and high schools, students who were determined to have been a direct contact have been notified and will quarantine until March 10. The rest of the students will be able to resume studying in-person next week.

Both superintendents said the sports schedules should not be impacted by the current situation in each school.

This week we are giving a tip of the hat to all of us out there who are continuing to wear our masks. It can be a nuisance at times (for those of us who constantly have fogged up glasses) and uncomfortable for those of us who wear them for hours on end. But thanks to all of you, our county cases have remained low and we continue to be in the lowest rank in the state. Kudos to us all!

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