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can continue to support families during these changing times.”

The list (see end of article) includes health resources, food and nutrition and parent and pregnancy support.

“I just want to let folks know there are options for support,” Nelson said. “People may feel that they need even more support right now, and I want them to know where to reach out to get that support.”

She also directs people to Evidence Based Birth, evidencebasedbirth.com, an online global evidence-based care practices.

According to Nelson, the website has been doing weekly updates on current research and around pregnancy and the coronavirus, as well as providing links to the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization.

“Some families just need connection with information about pregnancy and the virus, or needing information about what that looks like for them,” Nelson said. “I’ve been sending them to that resource. It’s just packed full of information.”

Nelson represents families in Western Lane County and has continued to reach out to families covered by Healthy Families, Parenting Now! and more.

“There was a lot of transition for work,” she said. “Instead of doing home visits, we switched to Zoom and telecommunication of some sort. This provides virtual or phone support for

families, making sure that they are getting the support they need, especially in this time of change. I’ve also been connecting with other resources to find out how they are changing their protocols and procedures so I can share that with families.”

Major questions she has received from families have been about hospital visits and check-ins.

“I know some families have been switching to home births, since they feel a little more safe not being in the hospital,” Nelson said. “We’re helping them connect with midwives and other support.”

WellMama has switched to online, and now offers a Zoom conference call for expecting and new parents.

“That’s an opportunity for people to get local up-to-date information, as well as support from other families,” Nelson said. “They can get ideas from other families on how people are navigating this. ... We’re just trying to be a little creative in getting the word out to folks. There are other options via telecommunications or phone support for Healthy Families, doula support, WellMama and things like that.”

While the transition to telecommunications has been rough, especially for rural families or those without high-speed internet access, there have been benefits.

“It’s been awesome, actually,” Nelson said. “People really feel connected. ... Just having that person to talk to, share resources or talk about problems, or come up with solutions around

some struggles they are facing has been really supportive to the families. I’m really grateful that we have technology to do that.”

Not everyone can do the video calls, but many agencies have increased their phone call capabilities.

In fact, Nelson noted that different people are contacting support agencies now that telecommunication can be part of their resources.

“For folks who are uncomfortable with one-on-one visits, it has allowed them a barrier of protection, in a sense, while still accessing support,” she said. “Some people who probably would never have accessed this resource before are now, because they have that barrier that makes them feel a little more comfortable. Other people, maybe because of location or timing, are also accessing this. With my home visits, I have more dads available right now to participate in the visits as support people. I think that it’s been helpful.”

Even birth doulas are going online to offer counseling, help plan births and provide virtual support.

“There are doulas in other parts of the country that offer that on a regular basis, especially for families that live hours away from a doula, or because it’s more financially appropriate for them,” Nelson said. “But families are still getting support, and I feel really good about that resource.”

Once the economic lockdown ends, the Florence Reproductive Health Fair will be rescheduled. In the meantime, Nelson

is working to get the word out about resources available locally and online. In some ways, increased telecommunications has provided a new avenue for reaching parents and families.

For Nelson, virtual check-ins have “definitely opened my eyes to the benefit in supporting families. I’m really seeing that I want to reconsider some of my thoughts around technology and continue to use it to support families. I really miss the one-on-one, but I can see that some families might appreciate continuing virtually when this is over. That can be for various reasons — it’s more convenient or they have continued concerns about the virus. I would imagine that there will be a lot of overlap for a while.”

Nelson can be contacted at 541-999-4880 and jenn@parentingnow.org. Her list of resources is available below.

“These groups are offering support in different ways, so people should be sure to contact them if they want support,” she said.

Florence Reproductive Health Resources During COVID-19

• **Birth doulas:** Many birth doulas are offering education and support virtually or by phone, while providing physical support during the birth if appropriate. These can be challenging times to birth and doulas can offer you support in advocating for your needs. In addition, the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) is now reimbursing birth doulas. People can go to

Doulas of Lane County, doula-soflaneounty.com, or ask their health or insurance provider for more information.

• **Coastal Babies/WellMama** is offering peer support via Zoom on the second and fourth Mondays of the month, as well as phone and text support. Go to wellmamaoregon.com to find more info or call Jen Nelson at 541-999-4880.

• **Daisy Chain** provides free postpartum doula support for all families. It provides virtual and phone support for new parents with postpartum care, newborn care, feeding, new parenting, relationships and community resources. Go to daisychainlane.org to register.

• **Healthy Families/Parenting Now!** is offering virtual home visits and phone support for all families at 541-999-4880. They also connect people with community resources. For more info, visit parentingnow.

org/parents/parenting-groups/healthy-families-home-visits/.

• **Pregnancy and Parenting Center**, 1525 12th St., is offering support virtually or by phone. Parents are able to access their curriculum and get one on one support. Call 541-999-2427 or on Mondays and Tuesdays call 541-902-2273. Visit www.pregnancyandparentingcenter.com for more info.

• **Welcome Baby Box** is still offering boxes through 90by30 of Lane County, 90by30.com/wbbinvite. The group works with each family to make a plan to deliver the box while maintaining social distancing. Contact Jen Nelson at 541-999-4880.

• **WIC**, a special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children, is no longer having appointments in Florence. Contact the Lane County WIC Office for support at 541-682-4202 and at lanecounty.org.

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Would it be better to let it go through the community to develop a herd immunity? Then everyone is theoretically protected.

But achieving herd immunity accepts that there will be a certain amount of deaths. Some proponents point to lower estimates of COVID death rates and argue that it is no more deadly than the seasonal flu.

While it is currently unknown if that is true, what is known is the number of dead compared to the flu.

According to the CDC, COVID deaths are double the average number of flu-related deaths in the U.S. Since 2010, the U.S. has averaged and estimated 37,461 flu deaths per year. COVID, even with social distancing, surpasses even the most deadly year for flu — 61,000 in 2017. And the numbers of COVID deaths are only expected to rise in the coming months.

“So yeah, we have herd immunity with the flu, but we also have thousands — tens of thousands — of deaths along with that,” Foster said. “Some people might think that’s a price they are willing to pay for the economy, most people would most likely say no.”

“The new normal”

“Social distancing can probably be relaxed, some,” Foster said. “There might be a little surge (in cases). Hopefully, we’ll be better able to handle little surges because of our increased ability to test.”

On May 1, Gov. Kate Brown laid out plans to begin mass testing in Oregon. Avoiding the controversies of the antibody studies, Oregon will only be focusing on testing new cases.

The state-sanctioned study will voluntarily enroll 100,000 Oregon residents, selected at random to represent the state’s “ethnic, socioeconomic and geographically diverse population.”

The participants will be monitored for temperature and other symptoms every day. If symptoms are shown, they will receive a test kit for the virus itself, not antibodies. If the test comes up positive, then the participant will be isolated and contact tracing will take place.

If a surge is occurring, the Oregon Health Authority can work with hospitals and governments in an area to help flatten the curve of patients in an area.

“This program is a game-changer. It will give us a more accurate understanding of the true rate of infection in Oregon and have ongoing precision monitoring any new outbreaks,” Brown said.

But the 12-month study acknowledges that the virus will be in Oregon for quite some time.

It also implies that lives will be lost.

“We won’t eliminate the spread of COVID-19 in Oregon with people being able to infect others before they have symptoms — or even those who never have symptoms,” Oregon State Health Officer Dr. Dean Sidelinger added. “But we hope to slow it as much as we can.”

How much the disease will spread in that time, and the consequences of that spread, are unknown.

“We’re not sure,” Peace Harbor COO Jason Hawkins said about the future of the virus in the Siuslaw region. “So, we take a step, we watch and we learn as we start to wade back into this. The first step is how to take care of more of our patients, how to live in a ‘new normal.’ I think we’ll learn from each step. We learn, we pause and then we take the next step. As we move forward, we’ll need to understand how it affects different industries and how we roll that out.”

But finding a balance between the health and the economy is becoming increasingly difficult.

During last Friday’s press conference, Brown announced more specific plans on reopening, including a timetable that could see Lane County remain-

ing in lockdown until June.

“This process will happen much more slowly than any of us would like,” she said.

What economic damage will occur in the coming months — and whether or not the virus will have a surge — is currently unknown.

“How do we live amongst the virus without a vaccine?” Hawkins asked. “What’s the impact going to be in the way we’re living our life? I think those are things we’re all going to have to measure and understand. Ultimately, we all need to realize that our actions can affect other people.”



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