overnor approves Washington County's reopening plan

By Ted Sickinger The Oregonian/OregonLive

Gov. Kate Brown has given the green light to Washington County's phase 1 reopening plan, meaning the county can begin allowing bars and restaurants, gyms, malls, salons, barbershops and other personal services

to reopen on June 1.

The county submitted its reopening plan last week showing that it met all the governor's criteria for reopening except the required number of contact tracers in place — 90 for Washington County. The county said that by May 29, it would have

enough investigators in place to meet County officials say they plan to another of the governor's contact tracing criteria, the ability to trace 95 percent of new cases within 24 hours.

Washington County's reopening would leave Multnomah County, the state's most populous county, as the only one yet to reopen. Multnomah

submit their own reopening plan to the governor's office on June 5 with the aim of entering phase 1 reopening on June 12.

In phase 1, gathering sizes are still limited to 25 and businesses need to operate under sector-specific guidance that lays out safety requirements and protocols for employees and customers.

Washington County's Latino community has been hit especially hard by COVID-19 and accounts for more than half the county's 700 positive cases to date.

STUDY

map drug use.

Continued from Page 2B For instance, the World Health Organization has used sewage samples to monitor for polio outbreaks. And in Oregon, researchers have used wastewater samples to

Even within the COVID-19 research, there have been similar wastewater studies in Massachusetts, Australia and

But in those cases and in the Yale study, the data can only tell one part of the story.

Peccia emphasized that the sewage sludge data is "a unique piece of information," not a replacement for traditional clinical testing. Because the sewage data is not individualized, it can't tell officials where to start

the contact tracing process or who to direct into quarantine. Clinical testing is "irreplaceable," Peccia said.

But the sludge samples could be used to predict COV-ID-19 upticks and potentially give officials time to prepare before a cluster of cases hits. This lead time could be lifesaving.

Peccia said he sees this data as an additional tool

that officials could use to inform their reopening plans or, if an area does see a spike in cases, as an early warning that those reopenings need to be rolled back.

"It could be helpful ... because these are tough decisions to make," Peccia said. "If you look at other states, it is not a stretch to imagine that the curve could go back up."

Because Peccia and his

team pulled samples from what is known as "primary sewage sludge" — which is a more concentrated form of sewage -- the process they used is fairly straightforward and inexpensive, he said. He thinks the process is "easily scaleable" and could be used in other municipalities across Connecticut.

For now, Peccia and his team have continued collecting daily samples at the treatment plant in New Haven, and they plan to present their data to the city next week.

"All of us wanted to do something that's useful and really hoped that it could somehow work out well enough that it could be useful for at least the city that we're living in," Peccia said. "And I think it could be."



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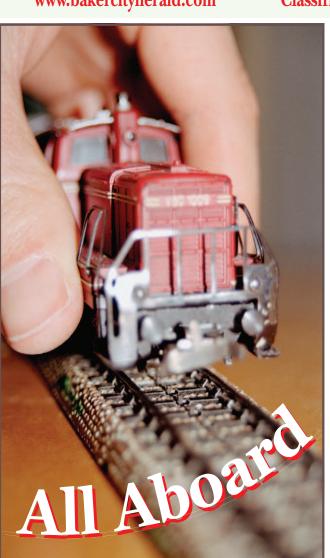
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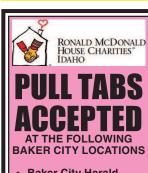
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