

## COVID

Continued from Page 1A

However, in March Gov. Kate Brown announced that a two-week “caution period” would apply for counties in certain situations.

To qualify for the caution period, a county must have dropped to a lower risk level during the previous two-week period.

Baker County did so, with 24 cases from March 7-20, which moved the county from the moderate risk to the lowest risk.

Counties that meet that requirement, but then have enough new cases during the next two-week period that they previously would have moved to a higher risk level, are instead given a two-week reprieve, during which they remain at their current risk level.

Those counties’ risk levels will then be based on case counts and positivity rates during the two-week caution period.

Here’s what that means for Baker County:

### Governor: ‘We are back on alert’

SALEM — COVID-19 infections are on the rise again in Oregon, a fourth wave of increasing cases since the pandemic began.

“This virus is at our doorstep — our numbers are rising and we are back on alert,” said Gov. Kate Brown at a Friday press conference.

A steep drop in infections since Jan. 1 had shown signs of bottoming out in recent weeks, but the most current data shows COVID-19 is again on the rise.

“The virus appears to be rebounding,” said Dr. Dean Sidelinger, OHA’s top infectious disease expert. “COVID-19 is a resilient enemy.”

The rise comes despite the arrival of three vaccines that can inoculate people from the virus. But only 18 percent of Oregonians are currently completely vaccinated, slightly higher than the national average.

— Gary A. Warner, Oregon Capital Bureau

Rather than jumping to extreme risk on April 9, the county starts the two-week caution period on Sunday, April 4. The county will remain at the lowest risk through April 22. Its risk level starting April 23 will be based on its case count and positivity rate during the caution period, April 4-17.

Baker County Commission-

er Mark Bennett, the county’s incident commander since the start of the pandemic, said he’s glad for the two-week caution period.

The alternative — the county moving to extreme risk for the first time since Feb. 4 — would have been a major blow to already beleaguered businesses, Bennett said.

The differences in restric-

tions between the lowest risk and extreme are, well, extreme.

For instance, with Baker County at the lowest risk, restaurants and bars can have indoor dining up to 50% of capacity.

For counties at extreme risk, indoor dining is prohibited.

Capacity for outdoor events, including high school sports, is 300 for counties at the lowest risk, and 50 for counties at extreme risk.

### Recent surge in cases

The increase in cases since March 23 pushed March’s total to 97, which is 27 more than the county reported during February (with three fewer days).

March’s daily average was 3.1 cases per day, compared with 2.6 in February.

Previous monthly totals and daily averages:

- January: 106 — 3.4/day
- December: 196 — 6.3/day
- November: 141 — 4.7/day

Nancy Staten, director of the Baker County Health Department, said the trend

over the past dozen days is troubling.

“We’re really concerned this jump in cases could qualify us for ‘extreme risk’ again, which will have a huge impact on our businesses and their employees,” Staten said on Friday, April 2. “We really need to get our case numbers down for the sake of our public’s health and our businesses. Please make very careful choices about gatherings and other activities where the virus can spread — it’s without a doubt on the rise in our community.”

Staten said earlier in the week that the recent cases are “mostly due to small groups of connected cases tied to social gatherings” rather than to a single large outbreak.

Of the 62 cases the county recorded from March 23 through April 2, the largest share — about 24% — are people in their 40s, while the second-largest — about 21% — are in their 70s, Staten said.

The Health Department didn’t have a percentage breakdown for other age groups.

“We’re seeing cases spread across all ages, but people in their 40s and their 70s have been most affected over the last week and a half,” Staten said.

She said Health Department officials don’t know of any situations in which a county resident who is partially or fully vaccinated has tested positive.

The county did not have a breakdown of how many of the 62 cases since March 23 involve people who tested positive, and how many are what OHA designates as “presumptive” cases — people who are identified through contact tracing as a close contact of someone who tested positive, and who have had symptoms consistent with COVID-19, but who have not tested positive.

According to OHA statistics, Baker County reported 19 positive tests (and 161 negative tests) from March 21-27, and 16 positive tests (and 396 negative tests) from March 28 through April 1. Those numbers include only positive tests, not presumptive cases.

## ARRESTED

Continued from Page 3A

Jonathanpeter Klein’s defense attorney, Michelle Sweet, did not respond to email requests for comment prior to press time.

In late December 2020, the brothers bought plane tickets using cash and flew from Portland to Pennsylvania two days prior to the riot, according to an indictment unsealed and reported by news outlets last week.

A photo taken on Jan. 5 in Washington, D.C., shows Jonathanpeter Klein wearing a shirt saying “Proud Boys PDX,” according to the FBI.

Prosecutors say the brothers were among the initial groups to breach the Capitol around 2 p.m., as reported by The Oregonian/OregonLive. Court documents describe how the brothers also helped other rioters gain access to the Capitol Building’s Upper West Terrace.

Prosecutors allege the brothers then entered and exited the build-

ing before moving to the north side, where they forced open a door using a wrench. A detention memo from Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul T. Maloney states law enforcement were then “tasked with protecting the Capitol and its inhabitants prepared to fend off yet another wave of attacks from the unruly crowd.”

“The defendants’ actions created a dangerous scenario that directly interfered with law enforcement’s efforts to secure the building,” Maloney wrote in the memo. “That they did so as part of a second or third wave of attacks — with knowledge of the mayhem that had already unfolded at the Capitol — shows their reckless disregard for others and the danger posed by these two actors.”

Two days later, the two brothers flew back to Portland, according to court records.

On March 19, a grand jury in Washington, D.C., indicted both brothers, accusing them of conspiracy to defraud the United States, aiding

and abetting in the obstruction of an official proceeding, obstruction of law enforcement during civil disorder, destruction of government property, and entering and remaining and disorderly conduct in a restricted building or grounds.

Court documents filed by federal prosecutors also show that the two brothers have been involved previously in protests with the Proud Boys in Salem and Portland, for which Matthew Klein has pending gun possession charges in Multnomah County.

In the indictment, photos show Jonathanpeter Klein wearing body armor and wielding a baseball bat and a paintball gun during violent protests at the Oregon Capitol on Sept. 7, 2020.

Prosecutors also say Jonathanpeter Klein shot at “unidentified targets” with the paintball gun amid a fight with Black Lives Matter protesters, as first reported by Willamette Week. Videos from news outlets that day

also show Klein appearing to chase a Black Lives Matter protester, and prosecutors allege that Matthew Klein was also there at the protest, according to Oregon Public Broadcasting.

On Saturday, March 27, a federal magistrate judge ordered the Kleins be held in custody pending trial. They are currently being held at the Multnomah County Detention Center, where they are expected to remain until their next scheduled hearing on Thursday, April 1, with a federal district judge in Washington, D.C., which will be conducted by video.

### Back at the ranch

Jonathanpeter Klein’s attorney had previously urged that her client be released to work at Ruggs Ranch back in Morrow County pending trial. Flynn would serve as a third-party guardian, the attorney said, adding he had helped Klein “kind of straighten his mind out,” as reported

by The Oregonian/OregonLive.

“Kids think different at that age,” Flynn said. “They’re not totally mature. They have different thoughts and ideas about life and I just (wanted to) influence him with my opinion.”

Flynn said that, had the judge not denied the request for Klein’s release, he would have accepted the role as third-party guardian. To Flynn, Klein was just in need of some positive influence.

“From what’s transpired, obviously the kid potentially made some bad choices,” he said.

While chatting with the FBI on his property, Flynn said an arresting officer told him that Klein seemed like a “very nice kid, very polite kid,” and that he would put in a good word with the prosecuting attorney.

“I was sitting there when he called the prosecuting attorney,” Flynn said. “I watched him on the phone and he told him that he was a very nice kid, very polite, very genuine.”



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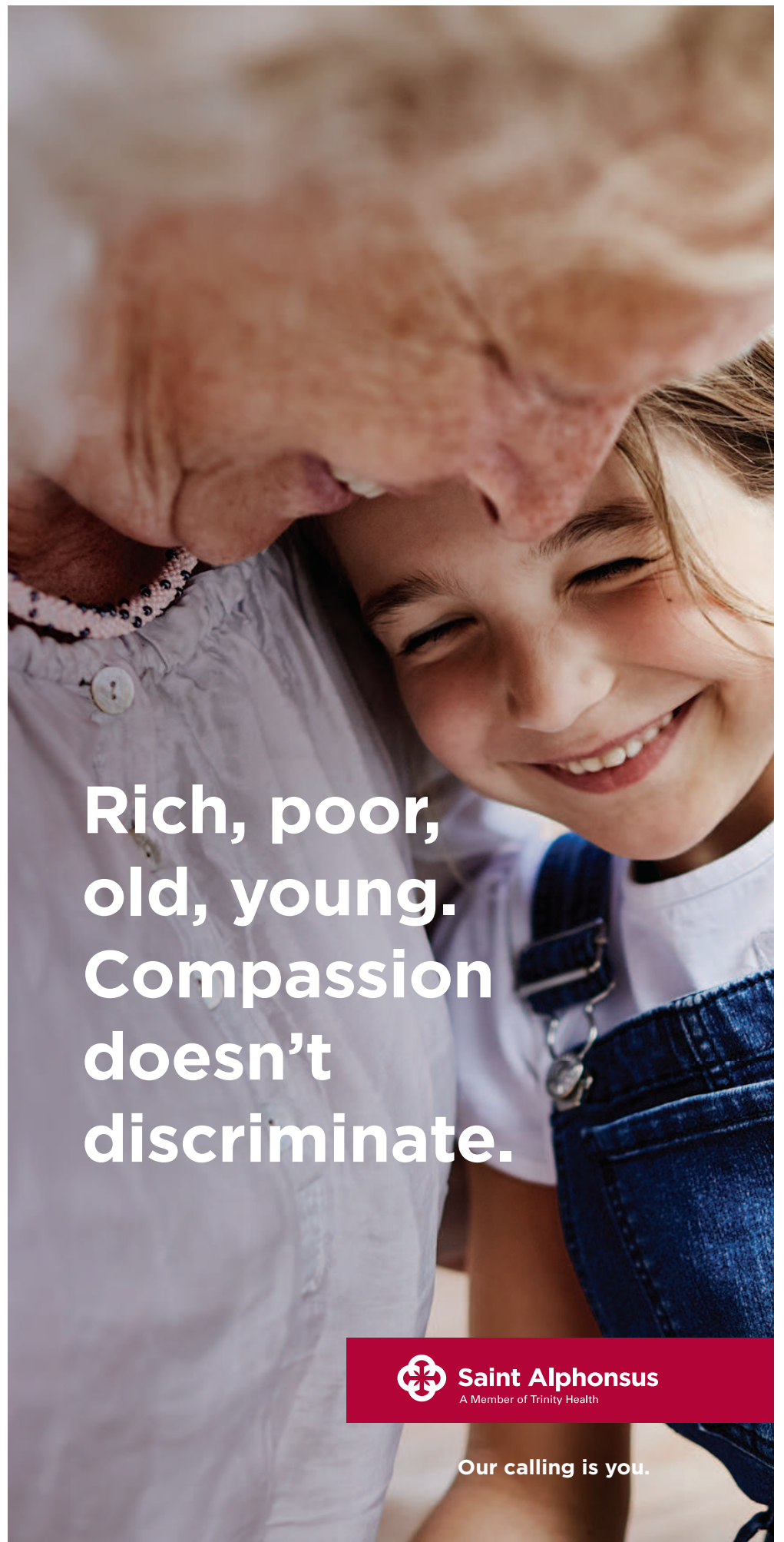
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