

Vaccines

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With months to plan, the Oregon Health Authority in November promised accurate tracking of COVID-19 vaccines once the highly awaited program began. To date, however, reporting has been spotty, making it impossible to tell exactly how many doses have been administered and by whom. The authority says it's working to fix reporting problems that show an unused vaccine backlog it estimates is overstated by tens of thousands of shots.

The confusion has left state health officials scrambling to call hospitals and vaccine providers across Oregon to determine who has given shots and prioritize which locations should get more.

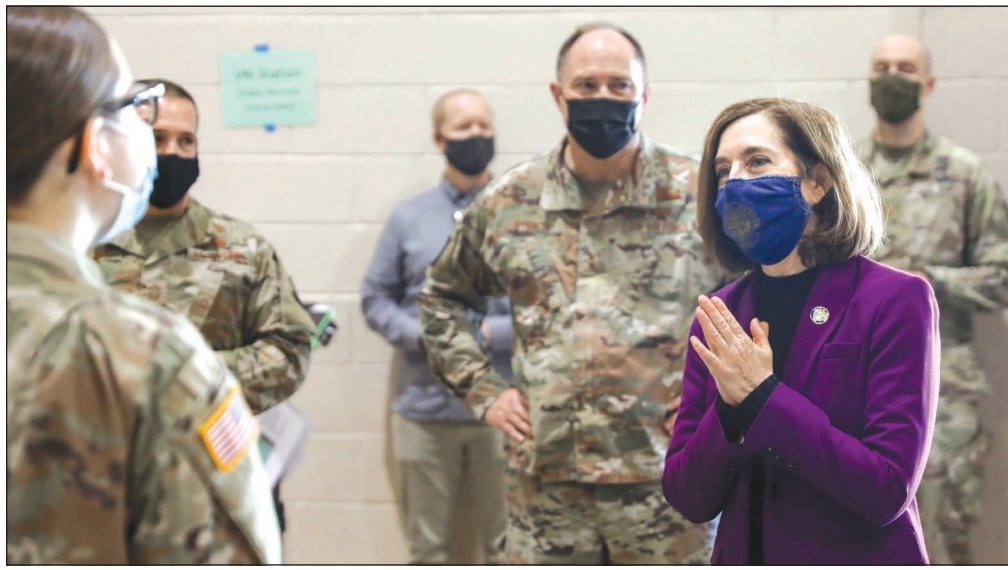
"It frustrates me that I can't look at a report and be able to tell the governor exactly where every dose is and how it's been administered on a day-to-day basis," said Dave Baden, the authority's chief financial officer. "I really do think we've made some good strides, increasing the pace of vaccinations and in cleaning up this data."

Gov. Kate Brown set a statewide goal to administer 12,000 vaccines per day by the end of this week. Oregon reached that goal last Friday, when 12,039 shots were administered. The authority didn't know that until Thursday, once its reporting caught up.

Overall, as of Wednesday, Oregon reported that 129,782 shots had been administered from a total of 321,225 doses received. But the reporting problems make it difficult to judge exactly how well Oregon is performing. Oregon trailed 36 other states for its pace of getting shots into arms, according to data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The importance of a well-functioning vaccination program will only grow in coming weeks as more vaccine doses are released to states and Oregon on Jan. 23 expands eligibility to teachers and those older than 65, a group of more than 850,000 people. To date, Oregon has only been vaccinating front-line health care workers and long-term care residents.

According to the state's tracking system, released to The Oregonian this week in response to a public records request, the four largest hospital systems in



Abigail Dollins/AP, Pool

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown visits with National Guard members at the Marion County and Salem Health COVID-19 vaccination clinic on Wednesday at the Oregon State Fairgrounds in Salem.

the Portland metropolitan area had more than 60,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine on hand as of Tuesday, even though they've said their stockpiles were smaller.

The state's data, for example, showed Oregon Health & Science University had administered just 4,000 doses of the more than 22,000 received, or less than 20%. A university spokeswoman said it had since updated its figures to show that OHSU has administered 17,642 doses of 32,575 received, or 54%.

Most doses at the major hospitals are spoken for, Baden said, and will be administered in coming days.

Before the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's December emergency authorization of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, the authority promised a smooth vaccine rollout. In a 136-page November distribution plan, the agency said it was working to increase both staff and training to make sure providers reported every vaccine given within 24 hours. The authority noted it was using an existing tracking system already familiar to the majority of vaccine providers statewide.

"A trained provider who is reporting properly should have virtually no errors in reporting," the authority's plan said.

Baden said some vaccine providers were new to reporting and others had been slow to report shots given despite requirements for prompt documentation. Some have used mismatching codes to report their facility name. But Baden said the reporting was rapidly getting better. "We are light years from where we were a

week ago and a week from now we'll be a lot closer," he said.

The data show a significant backlog not only at some hospital systems but also several state agencies.

The Oregon Department of Corrections, for example, received 3,800 Moderna doses last week but didn't immediately report using any, according to the data. The department runs prisons where 733 employees and 2,908 inmates have tested positive and 27 inmates have died.

Baden said he spoke with the department's director, Colette Peters, on Tuesday to inquire about the plan to ramp up vaccinations. He said he was told the department was accelerating its administration of shots. "This week is full-bore to work through every facility, all of the employees, as far as they can get through this week," Baden said. "They're making good progress."

A spokeswoman for the Department of Corrections said 1,200 employees, contractors and inmates will have been vaccinated by the end of the week, an increase of 450 from current levels. Vaccination clinics are scheduled next week at nine prisons.

Even the Oregon Health Authority hasn't quickly used vaccines at its own hospital. As of Tuesday, the data showed it had administered 67 of the 1,310 doses on hand after originally getting an allotment twice that size. The hospital is vaccinating patients in Salem this week, an authority spokesman said, and will hold make-up days next week for staff who missed initial vaccination sessions. Officials also transferred 600 vaccines

from the Oregon State Hospital to Salem Health to support a vaccination clinic at the state fairgrounds, the spokesman said.

As a result of its vaccine tracking, the Oregon Health Authority has reprioritized some shipments based on how initial allocations were used. It did not send scheduled doses to Portland Fire & Rescue or Samaritan Health Services, which runs hospitals in the Willamette Valley and the coast, an authority spokesman said, because they had administered doses to employees and didn't have more events planned.

In the meantime, as doses sit unused, immense demand awaits. Casey Kulla, a Yamhill County commissioner, said his county health department submitted a request last week for 700 doses for front-line health care workers, only to be told it would receive 100. Only after multiple requests to the health authority and governor's office were the 700 doses approved, he said.

Kulla said his county of 108,000 people could move 12,000 shots a week if the supply was there. The state data show it used 154 of its initial 300 doses, or 49%, as Yamhill faced what its county health director described as a "logistical nightmare" trying to decide which medical practices or law enforcement agencies to call in for its small supply of vaccinations.

"I would love to have a situation where we can respond to it like it's an emergency," Kulla said. "When we treat it like the big rush that I think it should be, I think we can do these things."

a red flag right there," Jessup said.

Petersen's complaint against Johnson never wound up in court, but in August, Johnson was charged by a Deschutes County grand jury with defrauding Green, and a warrant issued for his arrest — the third warrant by an Oregon jurisdiction.

Johnson's whereabouts were unknown at the time, but a tip to the Klamath County Sheriff's Office in November resulted in his arrest and detention in the Cowlitz County jail in Washington.

Deschutes County officials requested that he be extradited to Bend to face charges in Green's case but were denied due to COVID-19 protocols. Instead, Johnson was released from custody, and on Tuesday, he failed to appear at an arraignment in Bend.

A judge issued another warrant for Johnson's arrest, but his whereabouts are unknown.

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"These children have had so much loss and so much change this year, I think they need consistency and rhythm. There's no point in having a CDL with new teachers."

— Nicole Perullo, parent with children at William E. Miller Elementary and Pacific Crest Middle School

Reopening

Continued from A1

Comprehensive distance learning features more live instruction from local teachers through video chat. Students interact with fellow students online in breakout sessions, and they have set schedules like a traditional school day.

In Bend-La Pine Schools Online, students are much more independent. There is no schedule, and no live classroom video chats. There are local Bend-La Pine staff who can assist students when needed, but much of the actual teaching is self-guided — or parent-guided, for younger students — and uses pre-recorded videos from nonlocal teachers and written assignments. Elementary students in Bend-La Pine Schools Online can participate in optional enrichment activities, such as a book club, with local teachers and students.

In the new comprehensive distance learning plan, which will begin the week of Feb. 8, students will still have daily live instruction from local teachers. But while cohorts of students will still be sorted by grade, each virtual classroom will have a mix of students from various schools. And instead of every local teacher participating, it will only be those that chose to not teach in-person, said Superintendent Lora Nordquist.

The number of local teachers who will teach in the new distance learning plan depends entirely on how many families choose that plan. If there are more teachers who want to stay online than the district needs, then teachers can either take unpaid leave — which they would have had to request in 2020 — take medical leave if there are health concerns, or resign.

It is unclear how many new teachers will be hired, as a survey asking families which school option they'll pick won't be complete until Wednesday, Nordquist said.

How do families feel about this change?

Although some families might be frustrated that their

child won't have the same teacher starting Feb. 8, having teachers educate students in the classroom and at home at the same time is too large a burden for teachers, and ineffective for students' education, Nordquist said.

"Parents have asked, 'Couldn't we just put a computer or video camera in the room?'" she said. "That is not an appropriate instructional model."

Jen Sawyer — mother of a sixth-grader at High Desert Middle School and second grader at R.E. Jewell Elementary — said she felt indifferent about the new comprehensive distance learning plan. She appreciated the third option for families, but was frustrated that Bend-La Pine leaders didn't offer it immediately, and didn't come up with a plan that gave teachers more control.

"I feel like they had a lot of time to figure this out, to where they could match teachers with students a little bit better," Sawyer said. "I don't feel like (teachers) had a lot of say."

Nicole Perullo, who has a fifth-grader at William E. Miller Elementary and twin seventh-graders at Pacific Crest Middle School, said the new comprehensive distance learning plan, which she referred to as CDL, was inadequate.

"These children have had so much loss and so much change this year, I think they need consistency and rhythm," she said. "There's no point in having a CDL with new teachers."

Emily Gibson — a social-emotional learning specialist at Silver Rail Elementary — said she was delighted when Bend-La Pine restored the comprehensive distance learning option. The ideal situation, allowing each student to stay with his or her teacher, wouldn't make sense logistically, she said.

"It's not what we were envisioning," Gibson said. "But of course, when you're dealing with an entire school district of Bend's size, what we may be envisioning may not even be possible at a district level."

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Scam

Continued from A1

Petersen is hardly alone. What he experienced was a textbook paving scam, one of the most common ways homeowners are defrauded in the U.S., according to the Better Business Bureau.

The self-styled contractor who took Petersen for a ride in the summer of 2019, identified in court documents as Shanadoa "Shaun" Wayne Johnson, is alleged to be responsible for scams far broader than just Deschutes County, court records show. He has other open cases in Klamath and Lane counties and is suspected of crimes in California and Nevada, according to the Klamath County Sheriff's Office, which warned residents about Johnson in August and November.

In October 2019, Johnson showed up in the driveway of Bend woman Janette Green. According to an indictment in Deschutes County Circuit Court, he told her he would repave her driveway and later obtained a signature from her by misrepresenting that he had finished the job. A month later, he allegedly made off with thousands of dollars from Green, and attempted to defraud another Bend resident, according to court documents.

After that, Johnson reportedly headed south to Klamath Falls, where in August, an 86-year-old woman told police that Johnson began a sealant job on her driveway, and after accepting a partial payment of \$800, never returned to finish it, according to a Klamath County Sheriff's Office report.

That same month Klamath Falls couple Gary and Pamela Sims told deputies a man named Shaun approached them in their driveway and

struck up a conversation, according to documents filed in Klamath County Circuit Court that identify Shaun as Johnson. They'd recently taken a bid from an asphalt contractor to repave their driveway but were told the contractor couldn't get started for approximately six months. The man in their driveway, however, told them he could get started right away and the job would only cost \$800.

Johnson started working and a half-hour later, an unidentified woman associated with him confronted the couple with a bill for \$6,000, court documents state. The woman said that although \$800 was the cost they'd discussed, they hadn't factored in equipment and labor costs. The couple gave Johnson a check for \$4,000.

After Johnson left, the Sims made a troubling discovery.

"The Sims quickly discovered that Shanadoa Johnson did not seal coat their driveway and instead merely painted it black," court documents state.

In addition to criminal allegations, Johnson is the subject of numerous complaints with Oregon's Construction Contractors Board, including one from Petersen of La Pine. Consumers typically settle disputes with contractors through the board, which licenses contractors, but because Johnson isn't licensed, his alleged victims don't have that option.

Prolific scammers are often well-known to the agency's investigators, though there's little they can do, said Stan Jessup, board enforcement manager.

"Every year we catch several of the pavers from out of state and cite them. However, the limit of our authority is to fine the offender," Jessup said.

An Oregon law last up-

dated in 2007 makes it a crime to contract without a license, though it's a Class A misdemeanor and is very seldom prosecuted, Jessup said.

Jessup said legitimate contractors almost never have asphalt left over from a job.

"It happens every year here in Oregon," Jessup said of paving scams. "A lot of time the tipoff is the out-of-state plates, and the shiny, new equipment. And they blow into an area and stay in motels or RV parks and kind of concentrate on the rural areas of a state."

Beyond asking if a contractor is licensed and bonded, Jessup recommends looking up a contractor on the Construction Contractors Board's website, taking a picture of the contractor's ID card and never paying cash. Credit card payments are best because a buyer can later dispute the charges.

But basically, Jessup said, never trust someone who wants to get rid of asphalt.

"If a contractor's walking up to you unannounced, that's

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