

The Bulletin

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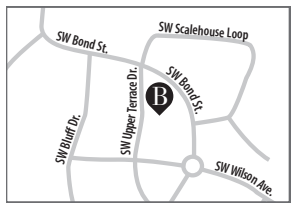
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Lottery results can now be found on the second page of Sports.

LOCAL, STATE & REGION

DESCHUTES COUNTY New COVID-19 cases per day

SOURCES: OREGON HEALTH AUTHORITY, DESCHUTES COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES BULLETIN GRAPHIC

COVID-19 data for Tuesday, Jan. 26:

Deschutes County cases: 5,283 (70 new cases)
Deschutes County deaths: 41 (1 new death)

Crook County cases: 669 (8 new case)
Crook County deaths: 14 (1 new death)

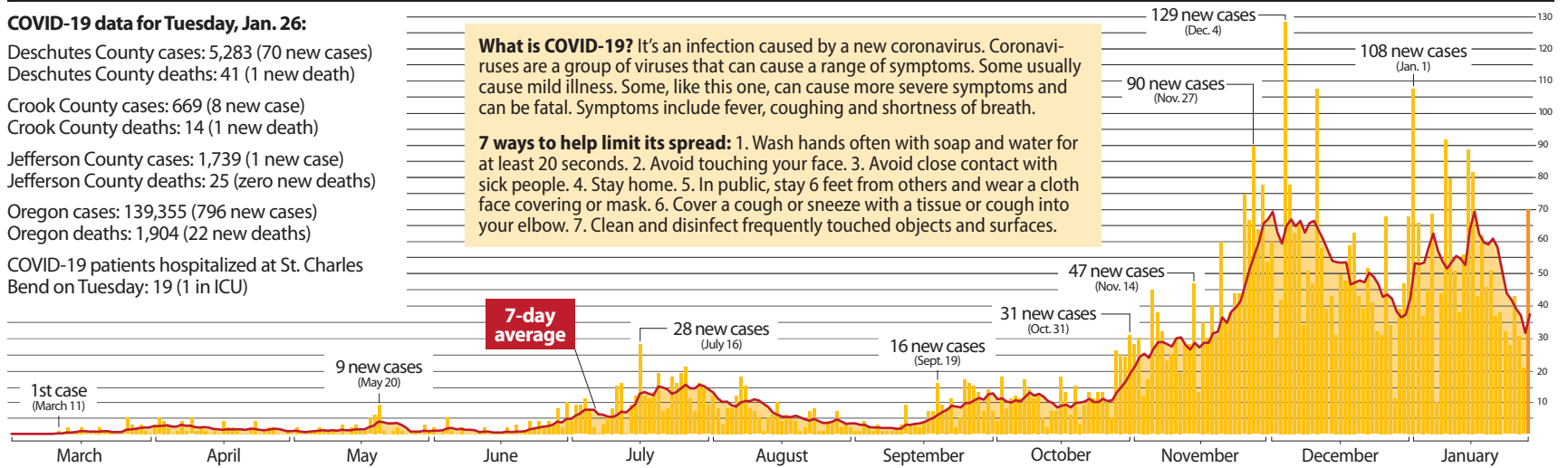
Jefferson County cases: 1,739 (1 new case)
Jefferson County deaths: 25 (zero new deaths)

Oregon cases: 139,355 (796 new cases)
Oregon deaths: 1,904 (22 new deaths)

COVID-19 patients hospitalized at St. Charles Bend on Tuesday: 19 (1 in ICU)

What is COVID-19? It's an infection caused by a new coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that can cause a range of symptoms. Some usually cause mild illness. Some, like this one, can cause more severe symptoms and can be fatal. Symptoms include fever, coughing and shortness of breath.

7 ways to help limit its spread: 1. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. 2. Avoid touching your face. 3. Avoid close contact with sick people. 4. Stay home. 5. In public, stay 6 feet from others and wear a cloth face covering or mask. 6. Cover a cough or sneeze with a tissue or cough into your elbow. 7. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Who goes first? Vaccine rollout forces some stark moral choices

BY GILLIAN FLACCUS AND SARA CLINE

HOOD RIVER — As COVID-19 surged, retired attorney Susan Crowley did some simple math and discovered a chilling fact: People over 60 made up 91% of coronavirus deaths in Oregon. So the 75-year-old was shocked when the state started vaccinating teachers this week before senior citizens in a push to get children back into classrooms. “I look at these figures and I am literally afraid. It’s not just a question of missing beers with my friends. It’s a question of actually being afraid that if I am not careful, I will die,” she said. “The thing that is so upsetting to me is that seniors don’t matter, the elderly don’t matter. And it’s painful to hear that implication.”

Democratic Gov. Kate Brown has defended her decision, choking up in a recent news conference because she said she “knows of families where 12- and 13-year-olds are attempting suicide” because of social isolation. Meanwhile, her sister, a cancer survivor, is being asked return to her Minnesota classroom without a vaccine, Brown told The Associated Press. “No matter what you do, people aren’t happy,” she said. “The teachers in Minnesota are furious at the governor because they are doing seniors first. And here, the seniors are furious at me because I am doing teachers first. There are no right answers, and there are no easy decisions.”

With a mass vaccination campaign underway, the U.S. is facing a moral dilemma as officials from California to New Jersey decide who gets the shots first. Everyone from the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions to communities of color and front-line workers are clamoring for the scarce vaccine — and each group has a compelling argument for why they should get



Gillian Flaccus/AP

Susan Crowley, a 75-year-old retired attorney, works in her winter garden Saturday at her home in Hood River. Crowley submitted public comments to Oregon’s vaccine advisory committee to criticize the state’s controversial decision to vaccinate its teachers and early childhood caregivers ahead of its oldest residents.

priority. It has local health officials and volunteer advisory committees doing ethical gymnastics the likes of which haven’t been seen since the military’s rationing of a new wonder drug — penicillin — during World War II or the decision to give white men first access to life-saving dialysis machines in the 1960s, when the new technology was in short supply. Hospitals and medical professionals make such moral decisions when triaging emergency room patients in a disaster or ranking recipients for organ transplants, said Courtney Campbell, an ethics professor at Oregon State University. But what’s happening now is on such a large scale that ordinary people — not just public health officials — are reckoning with questions of who is most important to society and why, he said.

“We’re being asked to emphasize some of our shared national values. ... We’re being called to treat other persons as equals, and that means equals in the sight of the law, but also moral equals, so that matters of privilege or wealth or socioeconomic status get leveled out,” he said. “This is a time when we get tested as to whether

we’re going to walk the talk.” While the nationwide priority has been inoculating health care workers and those in nursing homes, the decisions get more difficult deeper into the vaccine rollout. Federal guidance says states should prioritize the elderly, front-line essential workers and those with underlying medical conditions in the next phases, but ultimately it’s up to state and local officials to decide how to distribute the shots. Complicating matters is the nation’s vaccine distribution has been marked by disarray and confusion. States have complained about shortages and inadequate deliveries that have forced them to cancel mass vaccination events and appointments.

Originally, Oregon’s governor said teachers and residents over 65 would both be eligible this week but rolled that back because supplies weren’t there. Now, the state’s vaccine advisory committee is wrestling with how to prioritize the next groups. Central Oregon residents age 75 and older can now make appointments for vaccination, health officials announced Monday.

In emotional, tense exchanges at a recent meeting,

members debated the hypothetical merits of giving the vaccine to a tribal elder who’s one of the last speakers of their language versus a teacher or a migrant worker who puts food on people’s tables. Some advocated vaccinating all people of color first, regardless of age or health, while others favored giving the shots to those with certain chronic conditions, regardless of race.

Oregon lawmakers of color wrote a letter urging the vaccine advisory committee to prioritize low-income seniors, inmates and front-line workers instead of solely focusing on racial minorities, saying doing so would reach many people of color.

“We are concerned about the way this is being framed and how these groups ... are pitted against each other and against BIPOC communities in general,” the letter said, using an acronym for Black, Indigenous and people of color.

Dr. Kalani Raphael, a kidney specialist at Oregon Health & Science University and a Native Hawaiian on the advisory committee, said minority communities’ health care experiences are often invisible, particularly with COVID-19. He pointed to the death of a friend, a Utah community organizer, who got the virus after working to improve health care access for other Pacific Islanders.

“She was getting better. And then she just dropped dead at home, right in front of her kids,” said Raphael, his voice heavy with emotion. “These stories, to me, recenter the problem in these communities that are invisible and give them the support and attention and seriousness they deserve.”

While Oregon health officials grapple with who will be eligible next, vaccines started Monday for teachers and early childhood educators. More than 90% of students have been studying online for nearly 11 months.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Bentz named to House natural resources panel

U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, has been named to the House Natural Resources Committee. The freshman lawmaker will sit on the panel that deals with legislation affecting water, land, energy, mining and forests.



Bentz

Bentz said in a statement that he hoped to use his experience as a rancher, water rights attorney and legislator to address national policies. He said a top priority is changing land management rules to reduce wildfires.

Bentz represents Oregon’s 2nd Congressional District, which covers all or part of 20 counties in Eastern, Central and Southern Oregon.

COCC announces series of virtual speeches

Central Oregon Community College is offering its first-ever series of virtual speeches celebrating Black History Month throughout February.

The free series, all held over Zoom, will focus on “stories of Black triumph,” said Blakelee Evans — COCC’s Afro-Centric Program coordinator — in a college press release Tuesday. The first presentation, at 12:30 p.m. on Feb. 5, features Bend musician and spoken word artist MOSLEY WOTTA, who was the city’s first ever creative laureate, the release states.

Next is poet and author Arielle Estoria, who will give her presentation at 12:30 p.m. on Feb. 12.

Finally, motivational speaker Dr. Doug Luffborough will host his Zoom session at 12:30 p.m. on Feb. 23.

Those interested in registering for any of these virtual presentations can do so on COCC’s website.

— Bulletin staff reports

Motels for homeless push opening to mid-February

The Associated Press

Oregon is reviewing 19 applications from nonprofits and government agencies in 14 different counties to create unconventional motels-turned-apartment complexes to house wildfire victims and others experiencing homelessness.

The Oregonian reports this comes three months after the Legislature allocated \$65 million to buy motels to combat homelessness.

However, the nonprofit organization vetting applicants and distributing money to purchase the motels now anticipates that the first properties won’t be available for occupancy until at least mid-February, more than a month after the Oregon Community Foundation had hoped to start hav-

ing units available.

Oregon lawmakers allocated the millions this fall to purchase hotels and motels across the state to house wildfire victims and people experiencing homelessness. At the time, backers said that the money allocated to Project Turnkey could be used for 1,000 shelter units across 18 to 25 properties.

But only about 25 applicants have applied for funding through the program so far with 19 moving forward to the second round of the process.

The application process for the \$30 million wildfire fund has already closed, but the foundation is continuing to accept applications for the \$35 million fund to house people experiencing homelessness.

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