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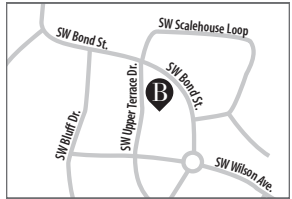
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Lottery results can now be found on the second page of Sports.

LOCAL, STATE & REGION

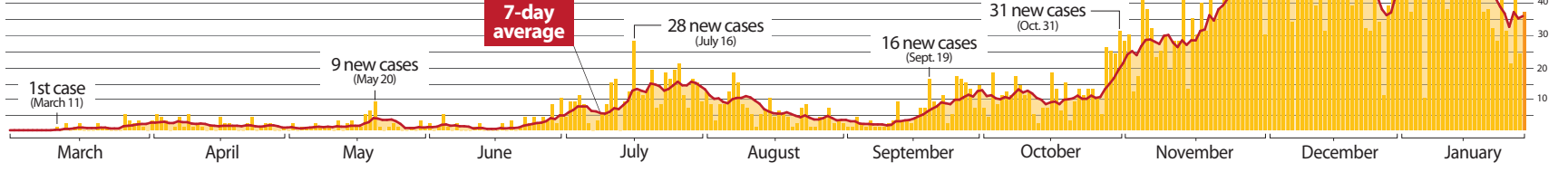
DESCHUTES COUNTY New COVID-19 cases per day

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

COVID-19 data for Thursday, Jan. 28:
Deschutes County cases: 5,339 (37 new cases)
Deschutes County deaths: 43 (zero new deaths)
Crook County cases: 679 (2 new cases)
Crook County deaths: 15 (zero new deaths)
Jefferson County cases: 1,750 (4 new cases)
Jefferson County deaths: 25 (zero new deaths)
Oregon cases: 140,783 (750 new cases)
Oregon deaths: 1,930 (6 new deaths)
COVID-19 patients hospitalized at St. Charles Bend on Tuesday: 19 (1 in ICU).

LOCAL VACCINATIONS
15,782
Number of vaccinations given by St. Charles Health System

What is COVID-19? It's an infection caused by a new coronavirus. Symptoms include fever, coughing and shortness of breath. This virus can be fatal.
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 mask. 6. Cough into your elbow. 7. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



COVID-19 vaccine

Oregon debates race in rollout

BY GILLIAN FLACCUS

The Associated Press

PORTLAND — The role that race should play in deciding who gets priority for the COVID-19 vaccine in the next phase of the rollout is being put to the test in Oregon as tensions around equity and access to the shots emerge nationwide.

An advisory committee that provides recommendations to Oregon's governor and public health authorities was scheduled to vote Thursday on whether to prioritize people of color, target those with chronic medical conditions or focus on some combination of groups at higher risk from the coronavirus. Others, such as essential workers, refugees, inmates and people under 65 living in group settings, are also being considered.

The 27-member committee in Oregon, a Democratic-led state that's overwhelmingly white, was formed with the goal of keeping fairness at the heart of its vaccine rollout. Its members were selected to include racial minorities and ethnic groups, from Somali refugees to Pacific Islanders to tribes. The committee's recommendations are not binding but provide critical input for Gov. Kate Brown and guide health authorities crafting the rollout.

"It's about revealing the structural racism that remains hidden. It influences the disparities we experienced before the pandemic and exacerbated the disparities we experienced during the pandemic," said Kelly Gonzales, a member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma and a health disparity expert on the committee.

The virus has disproportionately affected people of color. Last week, the Biden administration reemphasized the importance of including "social vulnerability" in state vaccination plans — with race, ethnicity and the rural-urban divide at the forefront — and asked states to identify "pharmacy deserts" where getting shots into arms will be difficult.

Overall, 18 states included ways to measure equity in their original vaccine distribution plans last fall — and more have likely done so since the shots started arriving, said Harald Schmidt, a medical ethicist at the University of Pennsylvania who has studied vaccine fairness extensively.

Attempts to address inequities in vaccine access have already prompted backlashes in some places.

To avoid legal challenges, almost all states looking at race and ethnicity in their vaccine plans are turning to a tool called a "social vulnerability



Erik Robinson/Oregon Health & Science University via AP

Andy Henning, an OHSU nurse practitioner, rings a bell and cheers for a vehicle full of newly vaccinated people during a drive-thru vaccination clinic at the Portland International Airport on Jan. 24. An advisory committee in Oregon that provides recommendations to the governor and public health authorities about which groups to prioritize next for the COVID-19 vaccine is tackling what role race should play in those decisions as tensions around urgent questions of equity and vaccine access bubble up nationwide.

index" or a "disadvantage index." Such an index includes more than a dozen data points — everything from income to education level to health outcomes to car ownership — to target disadvantaged populations without specifically citing race or ethnicity.

In Oregon, health leaders are working on a social vulnerability index, including looking at U.S. census data and then layering on things like occupational status and income levels, said Rachael Banks, public health division director at the Oregon Health Authority.

The committee's recommendations also will undergo a legal analysis, Banks said.

That makes sense to Roberto Orellana, a social work professor at Portland State University who launched a program to train his students to do contact tracing in Hispanic communities. Data shows that Hispanic people have roughly a 300% higher risk of contracting COVID-19 than their white counterparts in Oregon.

Orellana hopes his students, who are interning at state agencies and organizations, can put their knowledge to use both in contact tracing and in advocating for vaccines in migrant and farmworker communities. Vaccinating essential workers, prisoners and those in multi-generational households will reach people of color and put them at the heart of the vaccine plan, he said.

"I don't want to take away from any other group. It's a hard, hard question, and every group has valid needs and valid concerns. We shouldn't be going through this," Orellana said. "We should have vaccines for everybody — but we're not there."

6 stranded motorists get COVID-19 vaccine

One woman was so overcome with joy at the chance to get the coronavirus vaccine that her hands shook as she filled out the paperwork. A man was so excited, he did a happy dance. A young woman gleefully accepted the offer, saying she didn't think she would be eligible for a long time.

They were among six lucky recipients stranded in the middle of a snowstorm Tuesday who got a knock on their icy windows from public health workers also stuck on U.S. Highway 199 outside of Cave Junction in Southern Oregon.

"Once we knew that the vaccines weren't going to make it down the mountain, the choice was obvious," said Mike Weber, public health director for Josephine County.

As the winter storm bore down, he and a handful of colleagues packed up the vaccination clinic they'd held that day at Illinois Valley High School and headed into the snow. They had hoped to deliver six leftover doses to a half-dozen people who they'd lined up at a clinic in Grants Pass, about 45 minutes away.

They made it onto Highway 199 where a tractor-trailer ahead had jackknifed, shutting down the highway. The closure would last for hours, authorities predicted. Weber didn't want the team's valuable cargo to go to waste. The Moderna vaccines they had on hand were only good for six hours after they'd been drawn.

They were left with only one choice: Get out of their cars and offer shots to their fellow stranded motorists. Weber said with so many limits on supply and eligibility, it's critical not to waste a single dose.

"I've made it clear to my staff that above everything else, we will not waste any," he said. "We have gotten so little vaccine in our community that it really is a precious commodity."

—The Oregonian

LOCAL BRIEFING

Numerous pets saved in La Pine home fire

Firefighters saved a menagerie of pets Wednesday evening from a house fire in La Pine.

About 6 p.m., the La Pine Rural Fire Protection District was called to a structure fire in the 53000 block of Big Timber Drive, according to a statement from the district.

Firefighters arrived to find the human occupants safe outside the home but multiple pets still inside. In short order, firefighters rounded up a dog, two cats, several large snakes, a gecko, fish and a chicken and placed them in a safe bedroom in the house, rather than outside in the freezing weather, according to the district.

As they worked on the fire, crews contended with exploding rounds of ammunition and stores of flammable liquids in the garage.

A male occupant of the home suffered first-degree burns and smoke inhalation when he tried to fight the fire with a handheld fire extinguisher.

In all, 14 firefighters and four support personnel responded. The home received significant damage and was rendered uninhabitable, a district spokesperson said.

The fire is under investigation, with a portable heat lamp in the garage, used to keep chickens warm, a possible source.

The American Red Cross is assisting the family displaced by the fire.

—Bulletin staff reports



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