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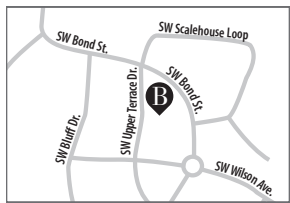
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Lottery results can now be found on the second page of Sports.

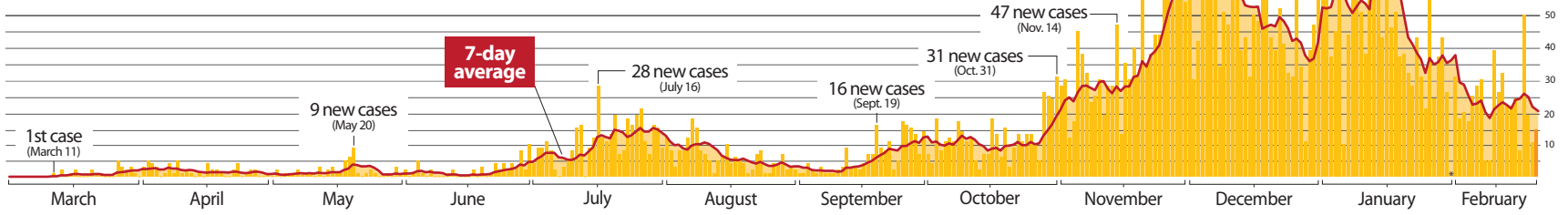
# LOCAL, STATE & REGION

## DESCHUTES COUNTY New COVID-19 cases per day

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

**COVID-19 data for Saturday, Feb. 20:**  
Deschutes County cases: 5,839 (15 new cases)  
Deschutes County deaths: 58 (zero new deaths)  
Crook County cases: 765 (5 new cases)  
Crook County deaths: 18 (zero new deaths)  
Jefferson County cases: 1,918 (4 new cases)  
Jefferson County deaths: 27 (zero new deaths)  
Oregon cases: 152,711 (536 new cases)  
Oregon deaths: 2,154 (5 new deaths)

**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.



# Oregon ranks low in vaccinating seniors

BY AIMEE GREEN

The Oregonian  
Oregon ranks third to last for the percentage of seniors it has inoculated against COVID-19 among 31 states with comparable data, an analysis by The Oregonian has found.

Just 21% of Oregonians age 70 and older received at least one dose of vaccine as of mid-February. The rate falls even lower, to 19%, when calculated against all of Oregon's 767,000 residents 65 and older. Only Rhode Island and Pennsylvania appear to have vaccinated a smaller percentage of its oldest residents.

Ten states have inoculated seniors at more than double Oregon's rate. One state — Indiana — has vaccinated almost triple the percentage of residents age 70 and older.

If Oregon had been vaccinating at the same rate as Indiana nearly 200,000 more elderly residents would already have received a first dose of the potentially life-saving vaccine.

The findings should come as no surprise to Oregon's seniors — the majority of whom still are not eligible to be vaccinated under a plan adopted by Gov. Kate Brown. Oregon became the last in the nation to start offering statewide vaccinations to seniors by age group, beginning with those 80 and older Feb. 8.

Residents 70 to 74 won't qualify until Monday. Oregonians 65 to 69 must wait until March 1. Many seniors have been left seething over Brown's choice to postpone their vaccinations in favor of teachers and other school staff. The governor's decision, aimed at reopening schools, stings all the more as they watch elderly friends and relatives in other states send text messages and share joyous photos commemorating their vaccinations.

Portland resident Terry O'Rourke, 67, knows seniors in California, Illinois and Florida who have been able to secure their first doses. All three states began vaccinating seniors 65 and older in December or January — a full month to two months before O'Rourke will become eligible. "The families with young children, I feel for them," O'Rourke said, recognizing most are still learning remotely. "It is a hardship. But dying is a little bit more of a hardship."

O'Rourke has diabetes and coronary artery disease and fears what the disease will do to him if he gets it.

He's been holed up in his downtown high-rise studio apartment with his dog since last March 8 — he remembers the exact date. He's forbidden anyone who isn't wearing a mask from stepping into the el-



Gillian Flaccus/AP file

**Susan Crowley, a 75-year-old retired attorney, works in her winter garden at her home in Hood River in January. Crowley submitted public comments to Oregon's vaccine advisory committee to criticize the state's decision to vaccinate others before its oldest residents. "The thing that is so upsetting to me is that seniors don't matter, the elderly don't matter," she said in an earlier interview. "And it's painful to hear that implication."**

evator with him when he must leave for groceries, medications or doctor's appointments.

"The stakes are really high for me," he said.

**The bigger picture**

When presented with the findings that Oregon lags far behind other states in vaccinating seniors, Brown's office referred a request for comment to the Oregon Health Authority.

Health Authority spokeswoman Erica Heartquist did not directly address Oregon's poor showing vaccinating seniors compared to others states.

Instead, she highlighted the state's good performance keeping coronavirus infections and deaths low among the general population — and in seniors. The state overall ranks fourth lowest in cases and fifth lowest in deaths per capita.

Heartquist also faulted the snow and ice storm that shut down some vaccination sites for one to three days from Feb. 12 to 14 in cities including Portland and Salem.

"Prior to the winter storm of the last several days, Oregon was also among the top states in the nation for the overall percentage of the population who had received a vaccine," Heartquist said in an email. "As appointments are rescheduled, we expect those numbers to catch back up."

But winter storms have ground appointments to a halt in other parts of the nation as well. It also appears Oregon's storm had little effect on the state's national ranking.

Oregon in late January ranked fourth in the percentage of first doses administered to eligible residents, including teachers and health care workers, according to the Bloomberg vaccinations tracker.

For reasons that are unclear, the state soon began to slide — tying for 18th place with two

## UMATILLA COUNTY

### Infant is state's first COVID-19-related child death

UMATILLA COUNTY — The Oregon Health Authority has reported the state's first COVID-19-related death of a child — an infant boy from Umatilla County.

The boy tested positive for COVID-19 on Jan. 17 and died that same day at Kadlec Regional Medical Center in Richland, Washington, according to a press release from OHA on Thursday.

He had unspecified underlying health conditions.

"Every death from COVID-19 is a tragedy, even more so the death of a child," Dr. Dean Sidelinger, OHA's health officer and state epidemiologist, said in the news release. "The death of an infant is extremely rare. This

news represents a tremendous loss to the mother and family. My thoughts are with them during this difficult time."

Children who contract COVID-19 are less likely to develop severe symptoms than adults, but they are still at risk, Sidelinger said.

The state encourages all parents with children who test positive and develop certain symptoms to seek emergency medical care.

Those symptoms include troubled breathing, constant pain or pressure in the chest, new feelings of confusion, being unable to wake up or stay awake when not tired and bluish lips or face, OHA said.

—East Oregonian

other states by the time the winter storm hit. By Friday, days after much of the ice had melted and clinics reopened, Oregon ranked 20th — meaning its ranking stayed virtually unchanged.

**No reporting standard**

States don't uniformly report vaccination data. Nineteen states don't publicly share the numbers or percentages of seniors by age group who've received at least one dose. But 31 states do.

Even then, there's no uniformity in the ages they choose to report.

Some only publicize figures on seniors 65 and older — some 70, 75 or 80 and older. Oregon provided numbers for seniors 65 and older and 70 and older — allowing compar-

isons with 30 other states that also provided that data as of Tuesday.

States ranged from a low of 18% to a high of 46% of residents 65 and older who'd received at least a first shot. In Oregon, it was 19%.

For residents 70 and older, states ranged from 20.86% to 59% vaccinated. Oregon was at 20.96%, just one-tenth of a percent ahead of Pennsylvania.

The bulk of seniors in Oregon who've been vaccinated so far have been living in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities — and that, like in other states, has made them eligible for shots starting as early December.

The rollout to seniors overall has been the subject of harsh criticism from seniors and their advocates. Oregonians 60

and older account for 91% of the state's COVID-19 deaths.

"Every day counts to people over 65, since they are in the crosshairs," said Maureen Hoatlin, a recently retired Oregon Health & Science professor who studied viruses and replication and is now an ardent critic of the governor.

Hoatlin worries that more contagious variants of the virus are silently spreading in Oregon and across the country, and we won't realize that until it's too late to vaccinate the state's seniors in time.

"Oregon has basically hung all these people out to dry," Hoatlin said. "It's a huge risk to take."

Meanwhile, advocates for seniors in some other states are glowing. Indiana — which is leading the nation with 59% of seniors 70 and older vaccinated with at least one dose — is one of them.

"We're pleased as punch that it is going as well as it has," said Sarah Waddle, AARP Indiana's state director. "Other parts of the pandemic and how it's affected the state of Indiana haven't been as pleasant, and so I think this has been a welcomed surprise."

**Who and when**

Long before Brown announced her plan to offer vaccinations to 152,000 day care, preschool and K-12 employees, she also allowed vaccinations of people other states hadn't yet.

Among them were police officers, veterinary clinic staff and jail and prison correctional officers. Poor communication from the state also meant leagues of others — including criminal defense attorneys, court staff and employees in the health care sector who work entirely from home — got vaccinated in the first wave before state officials started to clarify their eligibility.

Poor communication also appears to have led to central office administrators for Portland Public Schools who don't come into contact with students planning to start vaccinations in the past week. After Willamette Week inquired about the school district's plan, Brown refined her directions — saying they were not eligible yet.

But the state's vaccination scheduling tool for the Portland area still was allowing school administrators to schedule appointments in the Portland area as of Friday, without clarifying that they must come into contact with students.

"Very disappointing," said Greg Heinrichs, a 68-year-old Lake Oswego resident who is still waiting for his turn in line.

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