

## Vaccine

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Oregon will receive 34,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Every county will initially receive 100 doses to familiarize health officials with the vaccine, the first new vaccine since December.

“Because doses will be limited for the first few weeks, the state has committed some allocations to addressing access issues for some Oregonians who’ve experienced barriers to getting vaccinated,” said Jonathan M. Modie, lead communications officer for the Oregon Health Authority’s public health division.

About 4,800 doses will go to local public health authorities to vaccinate Oregonians living in adult foster homes and other in-home senior populations.

Walmart and Bi-Mart, two new partners in the state’s pharmacy vaccinations program, will also receive the Johnson & Johnson vaccines. Additional doses will go to some unspecified health systems in the state.

The new vaccine has pros and cons compared to the two-shot vaccine from Moderna and Pfizer that is currently be-



Ryan Brennecke/Bulletin file

**Karla Toms, a registered nurse with St. Charles Health System, administers a vaccine in the arm of Suzi Smith, of Bend, during a COVID-19 vaccination clinic at the Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center in Redmond in January.**

ing used.

Its statistical drawbacks have drawn the most attention. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine has shown an efficacy of about 80% in tests. The Moderna and Pfizer vaccines have an efficacy of more than 95%.

CDC officials have said that even if there is a slightly higher chance of getting infected with COVID-19 with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, it is strong enough to prevent severe illness and death.

On the positive side, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine re-

quires only one shot.

That makes it a boon for inoculating parts of the population that are difficult to reach for second doses or those who might not return for the booster of Moderna or Pfizer.

Because it only needs standard commercial-level refrigeration, it can be transported to areas farther away in rural or mountainous areas. The Pfizer and Moderna doses have to be kept in ultra-cold freezers, then thawed before being administered.

The White House on Tues-

day told states to plan on administering 16 million to 17 million total weekly doses of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines by the end of March, climbing to 17 million to 18 million weekly by early April.

More is on the way. States receiving 14.5 million doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine will receive 15.2 million doses next week.

Johnson & Johnson says it can ship 2.8 million doses to states this week of vaccine produced as it anticipated federal approval. But it won’t be able to sustain that number immediately. The company produced 3.9 million doses total prior to federal approval on Saturday.

The company says it will meet its commitment to deliver 100 million doses by June 30. The deal with Merck could double production within two months.

The Biden administration estimates that after a short dip in doses, the increased production aided by Merck will rise to 4 million to 6 million doses per week by March 31 and 5 million to 6 million doses per week by April 30.

When the first two vaccines were approved in December, U.S. officials were optimistic that some of the more than 20

additional vaccines in various stages of development would soon flood the country with enough doses to quickly inoculate all Americans.

But vaccines developed by Merck, GlaxoSmithKline and Sanofi failed, and research was discontinued.

A vaccine by AstraZeneca did not meet federal standards for test reliability. It is in use in Britain and other parts of the world. Vaccines by Russia and China are considered unreliable by U.S. standards.

Vaccination rates have picked up in recent weeks. The CDC said just under 51 million Americans have received at least one shot of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine. Of those, about 25.5 million have received both shots to become fully vaccinated.

That still accounts for just over 15% of the adult population vaccinated since the first vaccines were introduced at the end of last year.

Oregon is nearing 1 million total shots. Mass vaccination centers have been joined recently by a pharmacy program that allows residents to be inoculated closer to home.

In Oregon and other states, demand for vaccine has far outstripped supply. With ad-

ditional groups being made eligible, the competition for appointments to get inoculated has been intense.

Vaccination appointments filled rapidly, and breakdowns in websites and communication have plagued getting doses into people’s arms.

Recent severe winter weather across the United States, including ice storms in Portland and Salem, hampered distribution and forced cancellation of thousands of appointments.

CDC officials have said that when 70% to 80% of the population is vaccinated, the country will reach “herd immunity” that will protect even the unvaccinated because the virus will not find enough hosts to infect.

A key step remaining is to develop a vaccine for children. The current vaccines are only authorized for those 16 and over.

Biden has said that any excess doses of vaccine could be sent to aid foreign countries to help the long-term suppression of COVID-19 around the globe. There have been 114.7 million infections and 2.54 million deaths from COVID-19 worldwide.

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## Politics

**Continued from A1**

That’s 20 out of 30 senators. Democrats hold 18 seats.

“We cannot normalize the behavior of people walking off the job,” House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, said during a press call on Monday. “It was bad in 2019 when this happened. It was bad in 2020. It’s deplorable that it’s happening now, again, in the middle of a crisis.”

Republicans made the surprise move without telling Senate Democrats or the House Republican caucus. In a letter to Gov. Kate Brown, the 11 Republicans said they were absent to protest her extension of an emergency order that allows her to decide if businesses and schools are open or closed.

Currently, the only weapon that Democratic leaders have is minor financial fines and withholding per diems for expenses. A resolution to change the constitution to make a majority the minimum for a quorum has been introduced this session. Even if it won legislative approval, the change in the constitution would have to be referred to votes. The earliest the change could go into effect would be 2022.

With battles over the budget, taxes, guns, environmental issues, vaccines, housing aid and police reform expected to come up for votes, Kotek said there is concern that Republicans will depart again to derail majority rule. No lawmaker will be up for election again until 2022, leaving the status quo likely in place for the ses-

sion this year and next.

**No VIP pass**

Oregon lawmakers are getting or asking for special access to vaccinations for COVID-19. The Legislature is part of the “essential worker” group that will be eligible May 1. Some lawmakers can get vaccinated earlier as qualifying under currently eligible groups such as health care workers or those age 65 and older. Colorado is the only state that has inoculated legislators as part of a “continuity of government” effort. In Oregon, Brown has also yet to receive vaccine. Though Brown would likely qualify for an exemption under U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention rules, she would qualify under the same essential worker category

as the legislature.

**Blankenship testifies on redistricting headaches**

Local officials will have to scramble to deal with the fallout of the long delay in reapportionment of political districts, Deschutes County Clerk Nancy Blankenship testified last week before the House Redistricting Committee.

Blankenship appeared in her role as co-chair of the legislative committee of the Oregon Association of County Clerks. The 2020 Census data to redistrict legislative and congressional maps for the 2022 election won’t arrive until September, six months past the federal deadline. The COVID-19 pandemic made gathering population data difficult. The delay means the Oregon Supreme

Court will decide whether the Legislature, secretary of state or courts will draw the new maps.

The process is always politically charged, especially this year with Oregon expected to get a sixth congressional district, the first change in delegation size in 40 years.

Blankenship submitted a letter with detailed requests from the clerks’ group. It asked lawmakers to consider the impact of their decisions on a long list of related but often overlooked impacts on items such as community college, library, and other local panels.

The best route to less turmoil is simplicity and transparency, Blankenship testified.

“We would urge avoiding, whenever possible, dividing cities by federal and state leg-

islative district lines, especially smaller cities,” she said. “In the event that cities must be divided, consideration of city council districts, city urban growth boundary, county boundary, school districts and other affected communities of interest should be taken into consideration before confusing divisions are adopted.”

Before any final decision was made, she asked that county officials get a chance to look at the maps and raise possible conflicts before the decisions are finalized.

“Allow county elections officials time to provide feedback and clarification to the Legislature on proposed changes as we may be able to provide answers that help avoid mistakes from being made,” she said.

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