

Vaccination

Continued from A1

At the mass vaccination center at the Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center, volunteer Shannon Bergstedt learned last week's walk-in vaccination clinic was a success with people lined up around the building.

Bergstedt, a Bend resident who just started volunteering three weeks ago, helps give vaccines.

"There's still a lot of people who are grateful to be vaccinated," Bergstedt said. "Most of the patients who come in these days are on the second dose. They're glad to have it done."

"I wish we could get more people vaccinated so we can get back to normal."

According to the Oregon Health Authority data, as of Tuesday the percentage of people vaccinated, those 16 and older, in Crook County was 39.9%; in Deschutes County it was 59.9%, and in Jefferson County it was 44.4%.

Like the rest of the country, the number of daily vaccines has declined. Nationwide, it is about 20% fewer vaccines per day, according to the New York Times. The seven-day running average in Deschutes County, according to the Oregon Health Authority, was 1,576 vaccines per day as of Monday. A month ago, the running average, according to the website was 2,738 vaccines a day in Deschutes County.

Going into the vaccine effort, counties had few expectations, said Vicky Ryan, Crook County public information officer, in an email.

"We were hopeful that we could reach a majority of our county," Ryan said. "We also understand that each individual has a right to choose, and we respect that choice."

A higher percentage of the eligible population needs to get vaccinated to put the pandemic behind us, said Dr. Jeff Absalon, St. Charles Health System chief physician executive.

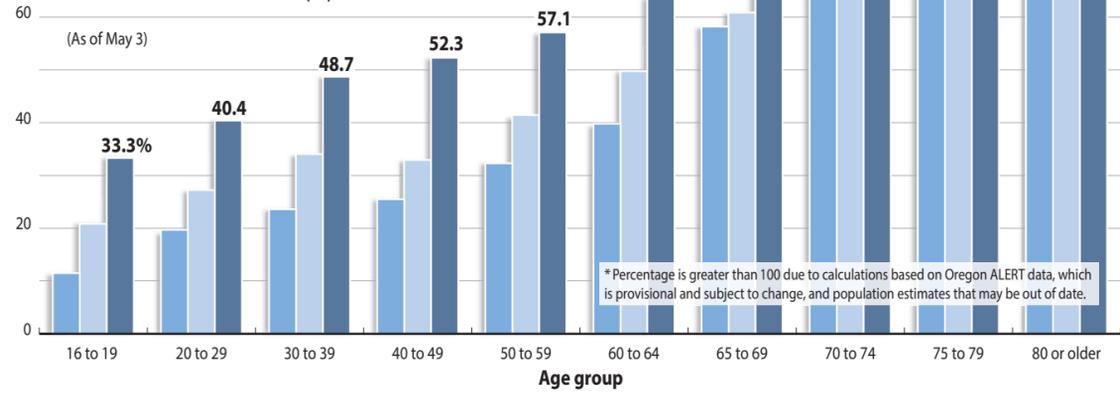
"The bottom line is not getting vaccinated could set us all back," Absalon said in an email. "The virus is continuing to mutate. The only way to stop the mutations from circumventing the vaccinations and natural immunity is by reaching herd immunity as quickly as possible."

The best way to overcome the pandemic is to get vaccinated, he said.

Professor Chi believes anecdotally that Oregon has a high number of people opposed to any kind of vaccinations and pandemic deniers/doubters. In order to convince them to become vaccinated, he said the

Percent of population vaccinated by age group

Vaccinations, which have been available to anyone 16 and older since April 19, have slowed in Crook, Jefferson and Deschutes counties since peaking in March and early April. Vaccinations are seen as a way to achieve herd immunity. Vaccinations are one tool in stopping the spread of the virus. Scientists have said that the country needs to have an 80% vaccination rate to protect the community. Currently all three counties have less than half the population vaccinated.

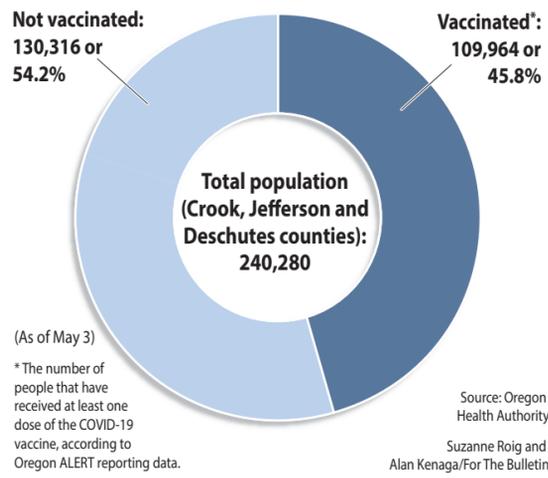


Source: Oregon Health Authority

Suzanne Roig and Alan Kenaga/For The Bulletin

Vaccinated population in Crook, Jefferson and Deschutes counties

The pace of vaccinations, which have been available to anyone 16 and older since April 19, have slowed in Central Oregon. Vaccinations are seen as a way to overcome the pandemic. The age group with the highest percentage of vaccinations among them are those 70 and older in Crook, Jefferson and Deschutes counties.



(As of May 3)

*The number of people that have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, according to Oregon ALERT reporting data.

Source: Oregon Health Authority

Suzanne Roig and Alan Kenaga/For The Bulletin

messaging needs to come from friends, family and church leaders, not from the government. He also said that now is the time for health officials to reach out to the migrant communities, people who often work hourly and don't have time to get vaccinated and bring the vaccines to where they work.

"Migrants have less time available, and there sometimes are language barriers to getting to vaccine centers. So we need to reach out rather than waiting for them to come in," Chi said. "For the vaccine deniers and anti-

vaxxers, the best message is if we want to save our community and our economy, vaccination is the path to that goal."

The only way to return to regular activities safely is to have more people vaccinated and to wear masks and maintain physical distances indoors.

"We need to do more to get them vaccinated. Bring the vaccine to the church. Convince church leaders. These barriers are occurring throughout Oregon. We have to outrun the speed of the variants."

Reporter: 541-633-2117, sroig@bendbulletin.com

Risk level

Continued from A1

In early April, when infections were on the wane, Brown announced that counties that would normally be in the extreme risk level could stay at the high risk level as long as hospitalizations statewide didn't top 300. The policy also required that hospitalizations rise more than 15% to keep the severe limits in place.

The period on which risk levels will be based beginning Friday is from April 18 to May 1. Oregon saw a statewide rise in infections. The state had 11,266 cases — 265.9 per 100,000. Positive tests made up 6.4% of all results.

But on Tuesday, hospitals reported 345 COVID-19 patients, and the percentage growth of hospitalizations was pegged at 14.9%.

The 0.1% miss led to a major policy U-turn.

"Based on today's numbers, I am keeping my commitment to Oregonians," Brown said.

As of Friday, no counties will be under extreme risk limits. The new numbers put 24 counties at high risk, four at moderate risk, and eight at lower risk.

Under the original criteria, large counties had to have less than 200 cases per 100,000 residents to stay out of the extreme risk category.

Deschutes County trailed only Klamath County for most COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents among the state's largest counties.

Deschutes County's infection indicators were more than double the extreme threshold, with 546.6 cases per 100,000, up

from 467.4 in the prior reporting period.

Klamath County's 891.7 topped the list.

Deschutes County's percentage of positive tests rose to 8.8% from 8.1%.

Crook County also remained well above the extreme risk threshold.

Crook County has 123 cases over the period, up from 106 in the previous period. It's 524.7 cases per 100,000 rose from 452.2 previously. The positive test rate of 9.3% was up from 8.3%.

Jefferson County reported 69 COVID-19 cases during the period, 289.4 per 100,000 residents. It previously recorded 213.9 cases.

But Jefferson County's test results fell from 9.2% positive to 8.9% positive.

Oregon Health Authority projections show the state can handle the current rate of demand for hospital beds.

Brown also said she did not expect the state to move back to the extreme level again at any point. The state is expecting a major increase in vaccine shipments from the federal government.

"Vaccinations are still our best path to protecting our loved ones, and staying on track to fully reopen our economy by the end of June," Brown said

Political friction in Oregon has increased with Brown's extreme risk decision and again extending her emergency powers, first put in place in March 2020, through at least June 28.

In the most concrete bid to curb Brown's authority, the House voted 28-27 Tuesday

against a motion to consider a bill that would give the Legislature a larger say in governors' declarations of emergency.

"Oregonians deserve a balance of power between their separate branches of government again," said House Minority Leader Christine Drahan, R-Canby.

Brown and the Oregon Health Authority Director Pat Allen have pointed to Oregon's safety during the pandemic that has killed over 575,000 Americans. Oregon has had the third lowest per-capita number of cases in the nation, at 4,432 per 100,000 during the entire pandemic.

Brown will next announce any revisions in risk levels on May 11.

gwwamer@eomediagroup.com

DEATH NOTICES

Mary Kay "Micki" Turner of Bend, OR July 8, 1941 - April 25, 2021
Arrangements: Autumn Funerals, Bend 541-318-0842 www.autumnfunerals.net
Services: At her request, there will be no services

OBITUARY DEADLINE

Call to ask about our deadlines 541-385-5809
 Monday - Friday, 10am - 3pm
 No death notices or obituaries are published Mondays.
 Email: obits@bendbulletin.com

St. Charles Bend pushes patient capacity

For the second time since the pandemic began, St. Charles Health System is near capacity and may have to shuffle patients to alternate locations.

"We're not turning patients away," said Dr. Jeff Absalon, St. Charles Health System chief physician executive. "This is about physical space."

The hospital employed its surge plans once before since the pandemic began more than a year ago. On Tuesday, St. Charles Bend's 24-bed intensive care unit had eight COVID-19 patients, seven on a ventilator and 10 patients for other medical emergencies. Six beds were available.

Depending on discharges and hospital patient counts, patients

could be moved to the hospital's medical diagnostic wing or over to Redmond at the former family birthing unit, Absalon said.

"We're poised and ready, but it all depends on what happens. Our census is better this week, but it's climbing again," Absalon said. "It's a dynamic process."

The hospital typically runs at 65% to 80% capacity, but since last week it's been running at 86% to 94%, he said.

To make room for more patients, the hospital canceled 18 surgeries for patients that required an overnight stay.

"We absolutely acknowledge the impact this has on patients that have to have necessary surgeries to promote and maintain their health," Absalon said.

Vaccines available in Central Oregon

Deschutes County is working to make it as easy as possible to get vaccinated with walk-up appointments. First-dose walk-up appointments are available from 9 a.m. to noon Wednesday and Thursday. On Friday walk-up appointments will be available between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Residents are also still able to schedule first-dose appointments through Friday at centraloregoncovidvaccine.com. In Crook County residents can get a vaccine from the county health department, Bi-Mart, Rite Aid, Clinic Pharmacy and Mosaic Medical.

— Bulletin staff reports

County COVID-19 risk categories

(Effective May 7 – 13)

Lower Risk (8)

- Gilliam
- Harney
- Lake
- Morrow
- Sherman
- Union
- Wallowa
- Wheeler

Moderate Risk (4)

- Coos (Moved from High)
- Curry
- Hood River (Moved from High)
- Tillamook

High Risk (24)

- Baker (Moved from Extreme)
- Benton
- Clackamas (Moved from Extreme)
- Clatsop
- Columbia (Moved from Extreme)
- Crook (Moved from Extreme)
- Deschutes (Moved from Extreme)
- Douglas (Moved from Moderate)
- Grant (Moved from Extreme)
- Jackson (Moved from Extreme)
- Jefferson
- Josephine (Moved from Extreme)
- Klamath (Moved from Extreme)
- Lane (Moved from Extreme)
- Lincoln
- Linn (Moved from Extreme)
- Malheur (Moved from Moderate)
- Marion (Moved from Extreme)
- Multnomah (Moved from Extreme)
- Polk (Moved from Extreme)
- Umatilla
- Wasco (Moved from Extreme)
- Washington
- Yamhill

Extreme Risk (0)

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