

The Bulletin

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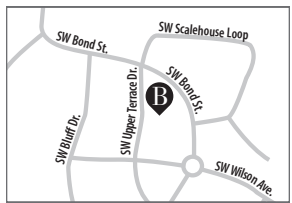
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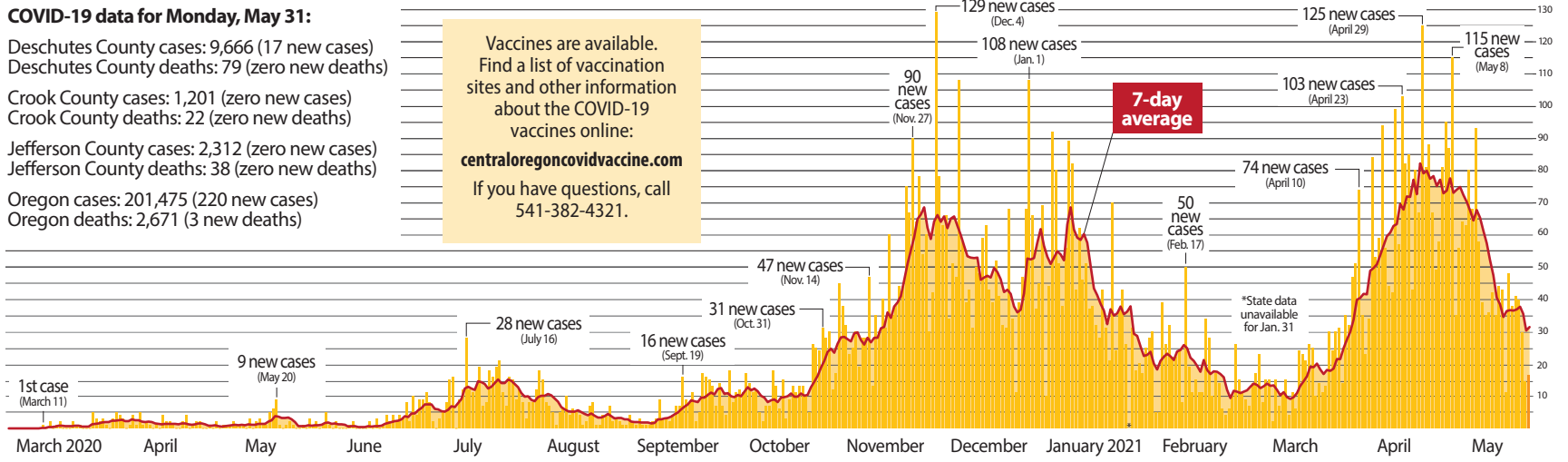
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Lottery results can now be found on the second page of Sports.

LOCAL, STATE & NATION

DESCHUTES COUNTY New COVID-19 cases per day

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



The unseen risk for unvaccinated people

When adjusted for vaccinations, U.S. case and death rates remain high

BY DAN KEATING AND LESLIE SHAPIRO

The country's declining COVID-19 case rates present an unrealistically optimistic perspective for half of the nation — the half that is still not vaccinated.

As more people receive vaccines, COVID-19 cases are occurring mostly in the increasingly narrow slice of the unprotected population. So The Washington Post adjusted its case, death and hospitalization rates to account for that — and found that in some places, the virus continues to rage among those who haven't received a shot.

The rosy national figures showing declining case numbers led the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to loosen mask recommendations recently and President Joe Biden to advise people to take off their masks and smile.

But adjustments for vaccinations show the rate among susceptible, unvaccinated people is 73% higher than the standard figures being publicized. With that adjustment, the national death rate is roughly the same as it was two months ago and is barely inching down. The adjusted hospitalization rate is as high as it was three months ago. The case rate is still declining after the adjustment.

Unvaccinated people are getting the wrong message, experts said.

"They think it's safe to take off the mask. It's not," said Lynn Goldman, dean of the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University. "It looks like fewer numbers, looks like it's getting better, but it's not necessarily better for those who aren't vaccinated."

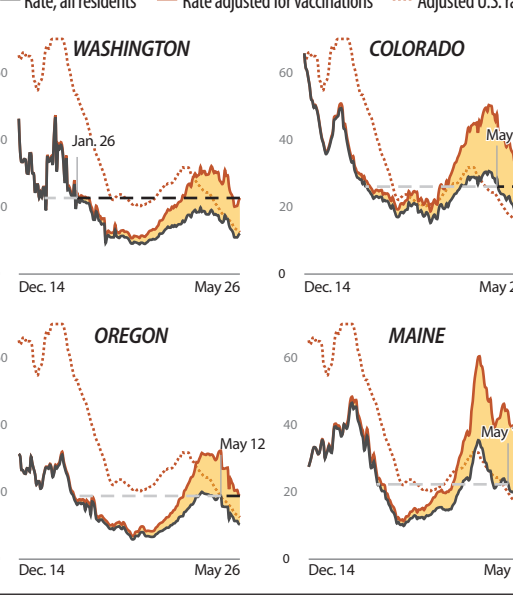
States with high case rates

The adjusted rates in several states show the pandemic is spreading as fast among the unvaccinated as it did during the winter surge. Maine, Colorado, Rhode Island and Washington state all have COVID-19 case spikes among the unvaccinated, with adjusted rates about double the adjusted national rate. The adjusted rates of Wyoming, West Virginia, Oregon, Florida, Michigan and Pennsylvania are slightly lower than the highest states.

Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia have adjusted rates below the national average. Before vaccines, Black people were about one third of new COVID-19 patients in Maryland and half in D.C. In

Average new daily cases per 100,000 residents

— Rate, all residents — Rate adjusted for vaccinations — Adjusted U.S. rate



The Washington Post

the latest data, Black people are just under half of the new cases in Maryland and more than 80% in D.C.

Oregon's current surge is driven in part by a COVID-19 variant known as B.1.1.7, which is 50% more contagious, said Tom Jeanne, a deputy state epidemiologist and a senior health adviser, in an interview. It is characterized by outbreaks traced to social gatherings with unvaccinated people and no masks.

"They're at very high risk for infection," Jeanne said.

Washington state officials say they are caught between applauding the optimism that comes with vaccination and warning everyone who isn't vaccinated that it's still dangerous.

"Things are getting safer for those who are vaccinated," the state's secretary of health, Umair A. Shah, told the Post. "For those who are unvaccinated, they remain at risk. We have to make sure that nuanced message is getting to our community."

States with high death rates

In addition to cases, several states still have relatively high death rates.

Coronavirus vaccines are virtually perfect in preventing deaths, so the decline in deaths nationally hides the steady COVID-19 death rate among unvac-

inated people.

Michigan, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maine, Florida and Illinois all have adjusted death rates about 50% higher than the national adjusted rate.

Looking at the death rate is not a good measure of the current spread of the pandemic, experts said, because it is a "lagging indicator" — people dying are usually infected at least a month earlier, which means deaths don't reflect current community spread of the disease. The steady adjusted death rate, however, shows that unvaccinated people are not yet getting safer.

More likely to end up in the hospital

Experts often point to hospitalization rates as a critical measure of the pandemic, because they reflect people getting very sick and aren't dependent on how much coronavirus testing a community is doing. When current hospitalizations are spread across only the unvaccinated population, Washington, D.C., and Michigan have rates about twice as high as the adjusted national rate. Pennsylvania, Maryland, Florida and Rhode Island have rates about 50% higher than the adjusted national hospitalization rate.

Tale of two societies

Washington state has been publicizing the extreme threat of hospitalization for unvaccinated people. It said unvaccinated seniors are 11 times as likely to get hospitalized than seniors who got the shot. For unvaccinated people age 45 to 64, the chance of COVID-19 hospitalization is 18 times higher.

Shah, the state secretary of health, worries people are being left behind while others feel the pandemic is past. "I hope this does not become a tale of two societies," he said. "The people who are vaccinated and are protected can resume their lives, taking off their masks."

"The people who are not vaccinated are the ones who are not wearing a mask or washing their hands. Those are the very people who often times will socialize and be around similar like-minded people. You're going to have the pandemic continue in those clusters."

About this report

The Post adjusted COVID-19 rates for cases, deaths and hospitalization over time by combining CDC data on cases, hospitalization and vaccinations. The Post used a rolling seven-day average of daily cases, deaths and hospitalization. For vaccination, the Post used the number of people who had received at least one shot as of each date.

LOCAL & STATE BRIEFING

Bend man arrested after two-county crime spree

Crook County sheriff's deputies arrested a man who allegedly stole a bicycle and pickup, drove people off the road and stole cash from a tip jar at the Powell Butte County Store on Saturday.

Jacob Austin Schunke, 42, of Bend, faces charges of theft, burglary, criminal mischief, criminal trespass and reckless driving, according to a Crook County Sheriff's Office statement.

The sheriff's office said the crime spree began with the theft of a bicycle and then a Ford pickup in the early morning hours Saturday in Bend, then continued in Redmond and ended in Crook County. The sheriff's office said that while on state Highway 126 in Crook County, a driver was reported to be running people off the road before stopping at the Powell Butte Country Store.

Anna Clark, a shift manager at the Powell Butte store, was in the back room when a man entered the store and tried to pay for items. She said he had tried to get gas as well, but the hose wouldn't reach around to his gas tank. He then grabbed the money from the tip jar and left the store.

"All I heard is that he stole our tip money," Clark said on Monday. "I ran outside and told

him we wanted our tip money back. We work hard for that."

The man drove off toward Prineville with the gas cap removed from his vehicle, Clark said.

After leaving the store, the man drove through a fence to get around a locked gate, the sheriff's report said. At a ranch in Powell Butte, the man allegedly burglarized the ranch and rammed a building to gain access to the contents of the building, the sheriff's department said.

After two high speed chases with Prineville Police and the Crook County Sheriff's Office on Highway 126, near the roundabout on Tom McCall Road and later on SW Williams Road, deputies arrested Schunke about 12:32 p.m. after he crashed the truck at the dead end of Wampler Lane, officials said.

"It could have been a lot worse," said Clark, who has worked at the store for two years. "We had customers in the store. He could have had a gun or something."

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Climber dies after fall at Mount Hood on Sunday

A 63-year-old man died Sunday morning after falling 500 feet while descending Mount Hood, the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office reported.

The man, whose name has not yet been released, had been climbing with his adult son when he fell at the 10,500-foot level on the Old Chute Route, deputies said.

Rescue teams navigated what deputies said was a difficult terrain and hazards from hydrogen sulfide and other

toxic gases venting from fumaroles along the route as they made their way to the accident scene.

They saw the fallen climber, who was unresponsive, then made their way down to the fallen climber by setting up rope systems. The man was dead when rescuers reached him.

Teams loaded the body onto a skiable rescue litter basket. At 4:20 p.m., they began making their way down the mountain to Timberline Lodge.

The climber's name will be released after his family is notified, deputies said.

— Bulletin staff and wire reports

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