

TODAY

It's Sunday, Aug. 1, the 213th day of 2021. There are 152 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

In **1907**, the U.S. Army Signal Corps established an aeronautical division, the forerunner of the U.S. Air Force.

In **1876**, Colorado was admitted as the 38th state.

In **1936**, the Olympics opened in Berlin with a ceremony presided over by Adolf Hitler.

In **1944**, an uprising broke out in Warsaw, Poland, against Nazi occupation; the revolt lasted two months before collapsing.

In **1957**, the United States and Canada announced they had agreed to create the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD).

In **1966**, Charles Joseph Whitman, 25, went on an armed rampage at the University of Texas in Austin that killed 14 people, most of whom were shot by Whitman while he was perched in the clock tower of the main campus building. Whitman, who had also slain his wife and mother hours earlier, was finally gunned down by police.

In **1971**, the Concert for Bangladesh, organized by George Harrison and Ravi Shankar, took place at New York's Madison Square Garden.

In **1975**, a 35-nation summit in Finland concluded with the signing of a declaration known as the Helsinki Accords dealing with European security, human rights and East-West contacts.

In **1977**, former U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers, working as a traffic reporter for KNBC-TV in Los Angeles, was killed with his cameraman, George Spears, when their helicopter ran out of fuel and crashed; Powers was 47.

In **1981**, the rock music video channel MTV made its debut.

In **2007**, the eight-lane Interstate 35W bridge, a major Minneapolis artery, collapsed into the Mississippi River during evening rush hour, killing 13 people.

In **2013**, defying the United States, Russia granted Edward Snowden temporary asylum, allowing the National Security Agency leaker to slip out of the Moscow airport where he had been holed up for weeks.

In **2014**, a medical examiner ruled that a New York City police officer's chokehold caused the death of Eric Garner, whose videotaped arrest and final pleas of "I can't breathe!" had sparked outrage.

Ten years ago: The U.S. House of Representatives passed, 269-161, emergency legislation to avert the nation's first-ever financial default; Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords returned to the House for the first time since being shot in Jan. 2011 to cast a "yes" vote.

Five years ago: The United States launched multiple airstrikes against Islamic State militants in Libya, opening a new front against the group at the request of the United Nations-backed Libyan government. Vice President Joe Biden officiated a gay wedding, a first for the early proponent of same-sex marriage as he presided over the union of Joe Mahshie and Brian Mosteller, both longtime White House aides, at the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington.

One year ago: The coronavirus forced baseball's 17th postponement in 10 days, prompting at least two more players to opt out of playing during the shortened season. Character actor Wilford Brimley, whose films included "Cocoon" and "The Natural," died in a Utah hospital at 85.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Ramblin' Jack Elliott is 90. Former Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, R-N.Y., is 84. Actor Giancarlo Giannini is 79. Basketball Hall of Fame coach Roy Williams is 71. Blues singer-musician Robert Cray is 68. Singer Michael Penn is 63. Rock singer Joe Elliott (Def Leppard) is 62. Rock singer-musician Suzi Gardner (L7) is 61. Rapper Chuck D (Public Enemy) is 61. Actor Jesse Borrego is 59. Actor Demian Bichir is 58. Rapper Coolio is 58. Actor John Carroll Lynch is 58. Rock singer Adam Duritz (Counting Crows) is 57. Movie director Sam Mendes is 56. Country singer George Ducas is 55. Actor Jennifer Gareis is 51. Actor Charles Malik Whitfield is 49. Actor Tempestt Bledsoe is 48. Actor Jason Momoa is 42. Actor Honeysuckle Weeks is 42. Singer Ashley Parker Angel is 40. Actor Taylor Fry is 40. Actor Elijah Kelley is 35.

— Associated Press

Medicaid: COVID-19 'shined a light' on disparities in access to care

Continued from A1

Despite Central Oregon seeing more than a 20% increase in health plan members compared to before the pandemic, it's actually been easier for some agencies to help people get covered during the pandemic.

"So our traffic is down, but every person we get stays on (the plan) until the end of the pandemic," said Sean McNulty, who supervises a small team of insurance enrollment assisters with Mosaic Medical.

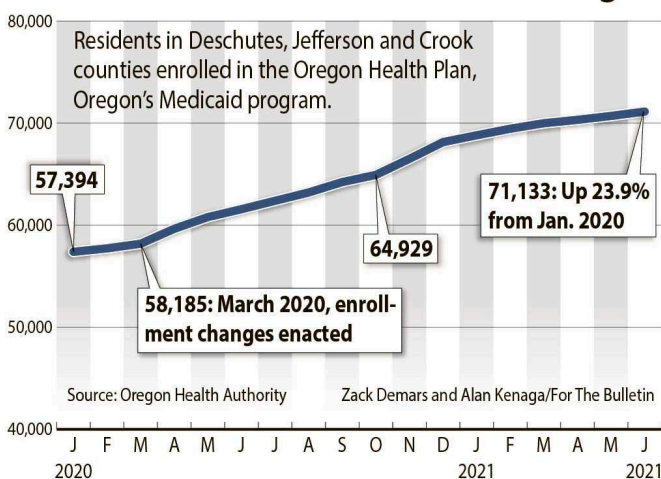
McNulty's team helps Central Oregon residents figure out what low- or no-cost health insurance options are available to them.

Now, the continuous enrollment rules have reduced their caseload by about half.

The rules for showing proof of income were also relaxed, and the ability to work through applications over the phone has allowed Mosaic's team to spend more time helping clients actually use their coverage once they're enrolled.

"We're providing a higher level of assistance as we have more time for each case," McNulty said. "There's a lot of navigation after. Getting someone benefits doesn't mean they end up using them."

That means doing things like helping members set up their first appointments once

Medicaid enrollments in Central Oregon

they're covered.

Changes on horizon

Once the pandemic ends — or, at least, the federal government's public health emergency declaration expires — the pandemic eligibility rules go away.

That means the state will again begin reevaluating the eligibility of those on the plan, and anyone whose income has risen above the Medicaid threshold since they got on the plan or who hasn't kept up with their paperwork will receive a notice that their coverage could expire.

"Whenever there's going to be something like this, there's always going to be people who

fall off," McNulty said. "This is why we're here, is to help people navigate that."

Since the change is dependent on the federal declaration, precise timelines aren't yet set in stone. Projections from the Oregon Health Authority suggest the declaration will likely expire in January 2022, and re-enrollment eligibility will be determined over the next six months.

An estimated 200,000 members statewide will lose their coverage when rules change. Some of those people will be losing coverage because they're no longer eligible, such as if they returned to their jobs and now make more than the income requirement.

echo the White House's difficulty responding to rising inflation. The phenomenon, virtually a non-issue in American politics for decades, has bedeviled the president's economic agenda and given Republicans a line of attack for midterm elections next year.

White House officials have monitored the delta variant for weeks but were surprised by the extent of its spread, according to a senior White House official. That prompted the urgent warning on the eviction ban as well as the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention's reimposition of a masking recommendation and Biden's speech imploring millions of Americans who have refused to be vaccinated against COVID-19 to get their shots.

The ban on evictions expired end of day Saturday.

"Even though the Biden administration has been well aware of the calendar, it was not until yesterday that the president requested the Congress to act," Rep. Tom Cole, an Oklahoma Republican, said Friday. "Now, we are being asked to take emergency action to kick the can down the road yet again."

Biden's rushed moves stand in contrast to his actions during the first few months

of the administration, when he and his advisers sought to demonstrate steady command of the fight against the pandemic and draw a contrast with former President Donald Trump's approach.

That strategy allowed Biden to claim credit for progress made against the virus, while casting blame for any shortcomings on Trump. But more than six months into his presidency, Americans appear to be pointing the finger at Biden for the continuing crisis — a growing political problem for the president.

A Gallup poll released last week showed Biden's approval rating falling to 50% from 56% in June. His ratings among Democrats and independents were their lowest to date, with less than half of independents saying they approve of his job performance.

But many will be part of what Lori Coyner, Oregon's former Medicaid director, calls the "churn population," those who frequently are off-and-on with the state's insurance policy as their incomes fluctuate or they miss their paperwork.

That churn, all but eliminated by the pandemic's enrollment rules, makes it harder for people to access the health care they might be eligible for.

"We do know that when people stay on, they keep their doctors, they keep their providers, where to get their prescriptions filled and all of that," Coyner said. "When they drop off and then come back on, they have to re-establish all of that."

Pandemic's impact could be here to stay

Coyner's goal now is to avoid some of those on-and-off relationships by making some of the pandemic's lessons permanent fixtures of the Oregon Health Plan.

It's a perfect time: The state's renegotiating its five-year agreement with the federal government laying out exactly how Medicaid in the state will operate outside of typical federal rules.

Coyner, now a policy advisor

heavily involved in designing the agreement, said the state hopes to make permanent the pandemic provisions reducing how often people have to reapply and reducing the amount of financial paperwork they have to submit.

"We learned that it's much faster for people to apply and get their application in, and then we can do the income verification later instead of having to have them get a check stub right at the front end," Coyner said.

Those changes to the plan still have to be approved by the federal agency that oversees Medicaid, and wouldn't be finalized until the new agreement takes effect next summer.

Aside from all the technical hoops temporary rules may have eliminated, the pandemic "shined a light" on disparities in access to care, added Dana Hittle, now the state's interim Medicaid director.

"For all of the flexibilities, or a good number of the flexibilities, that we were able to put into place because of the pandemic that we want to continue," Hittle said, "the goal is to make it as easy as possible for people to have access to health care and remove those barriers."

■ Reporter: zdemars@bendbulletin.com

TODAY'S

B I N G O

NUMBER

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

M JACOBS
FINE FURNITURE
FAMILY OF STORES

The Bulletin | EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY

G52
8/1/2021

PLAY FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN \$1,000!

No purchase necessary. See complete details at bendbulletin.com

GO!
MAGAZINE

Central Oregon's source for events, arts & entertainment

Pick up Thursday's Bulletin for weekly event coverage and calendars

Sherry Ray Inc. **Ladybug Hemp CBD**

We are one of the Largest CBD Shoppes in Oregon

CBD SALE
PAIN ANXIETY SLEEP

Premier 15
10 Grams 650+ mg
Regular \$59.98 NOW \$39.98
20 Grams 1,300+ mg
Regular \$79.98 NOW \$49.98

541 389-2228
Sherray.com & Ladybughemp.com
727 NE Greenwood Ave., Bend, OR 97701
(Next to Planet Fitness)

Mon - Fri 10:00 - 5:00 / Sat 10:00 - 4:00
Closed Sundays & Holidays

INDIAN HEAD CASINO 25th ANNIVERSARY

\$70,000 CASH & PRIZES IN AUGUST

SATURDAY, AUGUST 14th, 2PM - 8PM
Outdoor Activities, Music, Food & an Anniversary Souvenir!

IndianHeadCasino.com • 541-460-7777 • US-26, Warm Springs, OR 97761
See Players' Club for details. Management reserves all rights.

f t y