

Underlying conditions make COVID-19 worse

Everyone who has died in Oregon from COVID-19 has had an underlying medical condition. So, it was vital that the Oregon Health Authority release the data showing what those conditions have been.

After EO Media Group published an editorial online last week calling on the OHA to do so, the OHA made the data public.

Cardiovascular disease was the cause associated the most — in 61% of the deaths. That was followed by neurological conditions with 46%, a category that includes cancer and other conditions with 41%, and diabetes at 35%. There are other categories, including being a former smoker at nearly 24%. The numbers add up to more than 100% because some people have more than one underlying condition.

The data is based on an analysis of 101 of the more than 109 people who had died from COVID-19 in Oregon last week when the report was issued. It is consistent with the warnings from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention about who is at higher risk of the disease. You can see the

full chart on the OHA website.

Most people do not experience severe symptoms if they contract COVID-19. It's not by any means pleasant, but it's primarily fever and cough. Some people don't have any symptoms. If an infected person is older or has an underlying medical condition, though, it can make it harder for their bodies to combat the infection. The disease can trigger the immune system to overreact, leading to devastation to the lungs and other organs.

The message to take away is this: The disease does hit people harder who are older. But anyone who has an underlying medical condition is at more serious risk. So, if you have a family member or a friend in those categories, please do what you can to help them stay healthy.

Remember, it has killed children in the United States, too. Keep them safe. Follow the precautions you know by heart by now. Government officials in Oregon are planning cautiously to gradually reopen the state. It's up to us to work together to ensure that succeeds and people stay healthy.



GUEST COMMENT

Small businesses need cash

In the weeks since the Small Business Administration rolled out its lending program there have been significant implementation challenges.

Big companies like the Los Angeles Lakers, Ruth's Chris, and Shake Shack are being awarded massive loans, only to return them after public pressure.

Banks are putting concierge clients and those with high-powered lobbyists at the front of the line.

And, Trump-connected businesses are raking in the dough.

At the same time, too many small businesses that are the backbone of our communities are not getting the help they need. Without additional help, I fear that many will not open their doors again.

When the Senate returns to Washington next week, help for the truly small businesses needs to be high on the priority list.

The good news is there is a simple solution to this crisis. Small businesses need an influx of cash.

The latest research from Pew shows that the typical American business employs 11 workers earning an average of about \$41,000 per year. These businesses don't have the cash flow to survive for more than a few months and many may not want to take on more debt through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).

Giving small businesses cash is a simple proposal that would fill the gaps left by the Paycheck Protection Program and give these small businesses a fighting chance.

One significant problem with the PPP program is that, while laudable, its requirement that 75 percent



U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon

of loans be spent on payroll is not practical for all small businesses.

One Oregon small business — 1188 Brewing Company in John Day — illustrates this perfectly.

Shannon Adair and her family own Grant County's first modern-day brewery. Shannon closed the brewery in March and was forced to lay off her workers.

Obtaining a PPP loan requires hiring her workers back — possibly before it is safe — but with the brewery closed there are no tips to be made and nothing for them to do.

Bars and restaurants are expected to be among the last businesses to reopen and when they do, will operate at a reduced capacity. Maintaining a pre-pandemic payroll throughout the crisis is simply not practical.

In addition, PPP does not cover the significant start-up costs associated with re-opening 1188 Brewing Company. Shannon will need to restock — she can't save their craft beers and fresh food for months and months down the road.

And this is not a problem limited to businesses like bars and brewpubs. Retailers will also have significant start-up costs when they reopen — they can't sell their winter inventory in the summer.

Cash assistance would supplement the loans provided by PPP and refundable retention credit to maintain payroll to help small businesses stay afloat. It could be used for those non-payroll expenses like paying

rent and restocking inventory that every small business owner needs to meet.

The small business rescue package I introduced with Sen. Ben Cardin in March included direct cash payments, as well as the retention credit to maintain payroll.

While the retention credit was included in the CARES Act, the Trump administration did not support direct cash assistance, but a month of economic pain and implementation headaches should force President Trump to reconsider a simple, straightforward proposal that won't get caught up in banks' red tape.

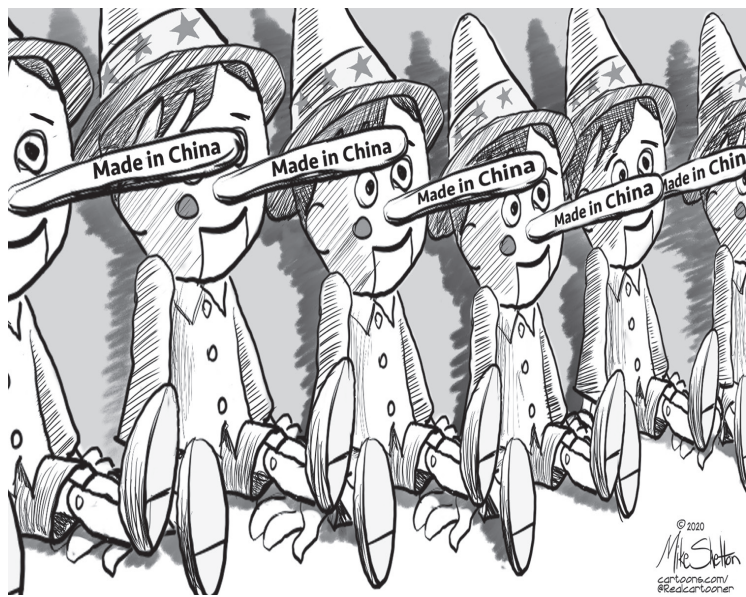
Under our proposal, small businesses with \$1 million or less in gross receipts and 50 or fewer employees will receive a check equal to 30 percent of the gross receipts reported in a previous year, up to \$75,000. Pew data show that this threshold would cover 74% of American companies with paid employees and it could always be adjusted if needed.

Small businesses owners like Shannon would also not be caught up in the mad dash to get to the front of the PPP line. The IRS would make these payments automatically based on the previous year's tax return data.

While there have been headaches, the IRS has done a competent job getting payments out to individuals and with additional support could do the same for businesses.

Nearly two months into this crisis it is clear that Congress has not done enough to help small businesses weather the storm. We can fix that with cash payments.

Ron Wyden is a Democratic U.S. senator from Oregon.



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Carpenter didn't learn from reprimand

To the Editor:

The Eagle interviewed both candidates in the 2014 election. One prominent issue was the 2004 "public reprimand" by the Oregon Supreme Court (SC S50321) stating that Mr. Carpenter "violated DR 1-102(A)(3)" by actions that disregarded a teacher's civil rights, which raised the question as to (Mr. Carpenter's) fitness to practice law, and whether he possesses the requisite trustworthiness and integrity to handle important matters involving legal rights of clients. According to Mr. Carpenter, his act of defamation (alleged sexual depravity, impersonation) by/of a teacher, and by extension, students, was fabricated as a joke. Official case documentation can be obtained on JUSTIA website, topic: In Re. Jim Carpenter.

In 2014, Mr. Carpenter also spoke of the necessity to uphold the Constitution and laws, preserve the safety of the public, protect rights of crime victims and pursue justice for all with skill, honor and integrity.

In regard to assuring the "safety of the public and pursuing justice for all," this is my experience:

In 2017, I was threatened with impending death by a band of wild-life scouting juveniles on the public road through my property. Verbatim: "You are (expletive deleted) dead!" A 911 call and a sheriff's report exist for

verification. Mr. Carpenter chose not to prosecute. He cited the 1971 Oregon statute for harassment, which does not include death threats. He ignored the 2016 version which does, and of course, applied in 2017 (ORS 166.065 (4)(D)(i, ii, iii)). Since no action was taken, victim's rights didn't rise as issue, also leaving integrity, skill and honor somewhere far behind.

Brushing aside a death threat with purposely misconstrued application of the law is as egregious as the 2004 "joke." The OSC reprimand did not take root; lesson was not learned.

Best not to take the risk to test this reality on the bench into the future!

Vega Nunez Ritter

Carpenter 'possesses the temperament and the humility needed'

To the Editor:

Grant and Harney county residents are capable, hard-working, proud Americans. Our right to participate in our own destiny is something we hold near and dear. With that right comes the duty to elect the candidates that will best serve our communities.

Jim Carpenter is one of three candidates now running to be our next Grant/Harney circuit court judge. Each of the candidates is an attorney, is well-educated and

has legal experience. Jim Carpenter has practiced both civil and criminal law in Grant and Harney counties and is currently working as Grant County district attorney. Having served as both a defense attorney and a prosecutor has allowed Jim to gain the perspective needed to be an impartial judge. Moreover, Jim truly understands our rural ideals and values.

My name is Kathy Stinnett, and I have served as Grant County's justice of the peace since 2013. In addition to the work I perform in my court, I have participated in statewide efforts to keep local court systems, such as justice courts, open.

Jim Carpenter recognizes that both state circuit courts and local justice courts have a role to play in providing access to justice for our communities. I know that, as a circuit court judge, Jim Carpenter will maintain the current positive working relationship between the courts in both Grant and Harney counties. Jim possesses the temperament and the humility needed to work effectively with the prosecutors, defense attorneys, court staff and other judges.

I invite you to join me in voting to elect Jim Carpenter as our next Grant/Harney circuit court judge.

Kathy Stinnett
John Day



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