

Hospital as prepared as possible for COVID-19

Blue Mountain Hospital has several options for patients depending on symptoms and conditions

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

The number of COVID-19 cases rose in August, but Blue Mountain Hospital continues to prepare and adapt as life with the virus carries on. Blue Mountain Hospital Emergency Medical Services Director Rebekah Rand said a person presenting symptoms at a hospital could take two different pathways.

If somebody is experiencing signs of severe distress, such as extreme difficulty in breathing, a bluish tint on the lips or face or chest pain, they would be recommended to call 911 for the ambulance or report immediately to the emergency room, according to Rand.

“If you’re feeling really bad, we want you to go to the ER,” Rand said.

If a person is experiencing milder symptoms, such as a cough, sore throat, congestion or a fever, then that person is recommended to call the Strawberry Wilderness Community



Contributed photo
A permanent negative pressure isolation room at Blue Mountain Hospital. The hospital has three negative pressure rooms available for isolation:

Clinic and schedule an appointment or talk to a nurse for triage, an early assessment done by a trained nurse.

The nurse triage would go through the patient’s symptoms and schedule an appointment with a provider — there are urgent care slots available — and determine if it’s safe to stay at home and self monitor the symptoms or recommend the patient go to the ER.

The type, number and severity of symptoms a person has all impact the

course of action.

“Some require immediate care, like, if you’re having shortness of breath, we would say, ‘Oh my gosh, we need to get you to the ER,’” Rand said. “If you’re experiencing milder symptoms like a fever or sore throat, that might be a situation where you are scheduled an appointment or recommended to stay home and quarantine.”

She said if a person still wants to come in and be seen, depending on what the condition is, an appointment

can be made.

Blue Mountain Hospital has the resources needed to accommodate for COVID-19 patients, such as three negative pressure rooms available for isolation at the hospital.

Two negative pressure rooms are currently set up with the ability to quickly set up the third.

“We actually did a recent drill to time how long it would take us to assemble that room and make it negative pressure in an isolation room,” Rand said. “We came in under 30 minutes, which is super fast.”

Rand said the hospital has an adequate stock of personal protective equipment, which include items like isolation gowns, gloves, goggles, face masks, properly fitted N95 masks and more.

The hospital can procure more material from their supply chain if more PPE is needed. Rand said this is an important development because when COVID-19 first made waves in March, it was difficult to obtain PPE.

Rand said not all patients with COVID-19 need to be hospitalized and that treatment for the illness is not specific right now due to a lack of a vaccine.

“Treatment is a lot of times supportive, and a lot of patients can actu-

ally go home and be treated with home quarantine and rest and plenty of fluids and things like that,” Rand said. “If a person needed to be transported to a higher level of care, they would be, but only when needed.”

She said that patients are sent to a higher level of care only when the symptoms or conditions are severe enough, but a majority of people can be hospitalized locally in one of their negative pressure rooms, or have symptoms treated at the hospital before sending the patient home with supportive care.

There are no capacity concerns at the hospital right now, but if the hospital ever needs to transfer people out, they can send people to St. Charles in Bend, which is part of region seven for emergency preparedness, she said.

“COVID has been a marathon, not a sprint, so we’ve been dealing with this for a long time, and we’ve learned a lot of things and reaffirmed our plan on how we’re going to treat COVID patients and keep our other patients safe,” Rand said. “We are well equipped and ready to provide the care to our patients if they need it and treat the people that have milder symptoms or transfer our more critical or severe patients to a higher level of care when that’s appropriate.”

Health department says two new COVID-19 cases reported by OHA were a data entry error

County remains at eight positive cases

Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County Health Department officials said two new COVID-19 cases reported by the Oregon Health Authority last week were a data entry error.

The Oregon Health Authority reported two new positive cases of COVID-19 in Grant County Thursday, but according to Kimberly Lindsay, the county’s public health administrator, those cases have been attributed to a data entry error made when entering a test result. Lindsay said the total number of Grant County cases remains at eight.

Lindsay said the health department receives alerts from the OHA state database whenever anyone in Grant County tests positive for an infectious disease, including COVID-19.

“We are sorry for any confusion or concerns that have occurred from this data entry error but are happy to report that we have not seen any new cases,” Lindsay said.

The health department, according to its website, encourages all residents to do the following:

- Wear mask indoors and wear a mask outdoors if 6 feet of distancing can not be maintained.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Stay home when feeling ill.

After someone contracts COVID-19, if they develop symptoms, they will usually appear within 14 days. Symptoms include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Anyone who has these symptoms should call 211 or the health department at 541-575-0429.

Grant County Chamber of Commerce approves funds to help fire victims

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

Firefighters around Oregon continue the battle against wildfires with progress made this week, but for the people who lost so much in the blaze, the Grant County Chamber of Commerce joined the efforts of other county residents in giving a hand.

The chamber board approved donating \$3,000 to a community affected by the fire to aid in recovery.

“We have a lot of fire-stricken communities around our state, and I, as the chamber, would like to help at least one of those communities...,” said Chamber President Sherrie Rininger. “We had so much support for our community when we had our fire, and I would like to show support to another community that needs support right now.”

Since the chamber installation dinner seemed unlikely due to COVID-19, the chamber voted to donate the funds to another chamber.

Chamber manager Tammy Bremner said members are checking with chambers of commerce in Stayton and Vida to determine the need.

“...These businesses are destroyed, and we need to do something to help them to survive,” Rininger said.

Chamber member Bruce Ward also recommended having a trailer at the chamber accepting donations. He said

he would be willing to deliver the supplies.

“If we had one (trailer) at the Grant County Chamber, and we had people fill it, I would be more than happy to haul it to Detroit or Mills City,” Ward said. “I’ve driven that road a million times, and it makes me sick to think that it’s going to look just like this canyon the next time I go through.”

The chamber board made no decision yet on the idea of the trailer.

In other chamber news:

- The Grant County Chamber of Commerce Business Enhancement Grant Program has started, and the chamber sent out seven applications with four returned for grants.

Bremner said the board for the grant program will meet and make a decision on the applicants by Oct. 15.

The program, adopted by the chamber board on Aug. 20, was created specifically for business and commercial building enhancement to improve the curb appeal.

There is \$20,000 budgeted for the program with applicants able to apply for up to \$2,500 for a project.

- The chamber has received 75% of the membership renewals, and no business so far decided to take a discount. Three businesses contributed money to help other members pay their membership dues.
- First Community Credit Union and Katrina’s Barber Shop joined the chamber.

Republican Central Committee to meet Oct. 1

Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant County Republican Central Committee will meet from 3-5 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 1, at Oregon Telephone Corporation Connections, 155 W. Main Street, John Day. The public is welcome.

Youth Livestock Auction Committee to meet Sept. 29

Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant County Youth Livestock Auction Committee will meet at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 29, at Keerins Hall at the Grant County Fairgrounds in John Day.

OBITUARIES

Robert Lee Kerr

Dec. 22, 1935 – Sept. 17, 2020

Robert (Bob) Lee Kerr, 84, of Canyon City passed away on Sept. 17, 2020. A memorial service will be held on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020, beginning at 1 p.m. at the Grant County Fairgrounds. Family and friends are welcome to join, potluck to follow.

Bob was born on Dec. 22, 1935, in Santa Rosa, California. He married Judy (Horton) Kerr in Anchorage, Alaska, on Feb. 1, 1986, moving to Canyon City, Oregon, in 1990. Bob was a well-known gunsmith and custom stock maker with over 60 years’ experience. He was also a Shriner and a life member of the NRA.

He is survived by his wife, Judy; son Steve Kerr of Sacramento, California; daughters, Sherrie Stone of Eagle, Idaho, Becky Stonerod-Pereira and Kimberly Phillipp of Roseburg, Oregon, and Jodi Cornwall of John Day, Oregon; 13 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

Memorial Contributions may be made to Shriners Children’s Hospital Travel Fund through Driskill Memorial Chapel at 241 S. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845.

To offer online condolences to the family, visit driskillmemorialchapel.com.



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Brenda Joyce (Atchley) Densberger
April 6, 1943 – September 13, 2020

Brenda Densberger passed September 13, 2020 at Blue Mountain Hospital in John Day, Oregon, with her husband of 61 years and life partner Roy Densberger by her side, at the age of 77. Brenda was born on April 6, 1943 to William Henry Atchley and Vera (Murphy) Atchley in Mena, Arkansas. Brenda moved to California in 1947 and ultimately to St. Helena (Napa Valley) California in 1958, where she met her devoted husband Roy. Roy and Brenda married in 1959. Brenda and Roy moved to Grant County Oregon in 1994, initially to their cattle ranch in Mt. Vernon, and, later, John Day.

Brenda is preceded in death by her parents Bill (September 13, 1997) and Vera, her sister, Linda Brink, and brother, William Gordon Atchley.

She is survived by her sister Jean Wawak (Jerry); sister-in-law, Sylvia Atchley; her husband, Roy; their two sons, Will (Elizabeth) and Joe, both of St. Helena; 5 grandchildren: Erica Densberger (Anthony Wilson), Meagan McConnell (Mickey), Morgan (Samantha), John (Lyndi) and Madelyn Levesque (Beau); and 4 great-grandchildren: Miles Morgan McConnell, William Henry Densberger, Logan Adelia McConnell and Blake Winthrop Densberger; and their extensive extended family.

Brenda was a loving mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, and loved every bit of each of those roles. With her early family, Brenda provided the best of ranching life (cattle and horses) to her boys as well as being team mom to the many youth sports they participated in. She later was a support leader with the Rutherford 4-H Group (cattle). Brenda was the best grandmother in every aspect and famed in the family for her world-class apple pie and potato salad recipes that her grandchildren have embraced as their own.

Brenda had an active career in both the Napa Valley where she served as Executive Secretary to Joe Heitz (Heitz Wine Cellars) and later in Grant County with DR Johnson and Mike Kilpatrick. Most recently, in retirement, Brenda was active with the John Day Golf Club where she served as a Board Member among many other roles.

To leave an online condolence for the family, please visit driskillmemorialchapel.com. Paid for by the family of Brenda Densberger.

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Last Week’s Temps

John Day	HI/LO
Tuesday	86/51
Wednesday	91/51
Thursday.....	83/51
Friday.....	80/53
Saturday	70/51
Sunday.....	76/43
Monday.....	85/46

24/7 FORECAST

AUTOMATED: 541-575-1122

ROAD CONDITIONS: 511; TRIPCHECK.COM

NOAA WEATHER RADIO FOR JOHN DAY

162.500 MHZ

WEATHER FORECAST FOR THE WEEK OF SEPT. 23 - 29

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Patchy smoke	Rain likely	Chance of rain	Mostly sunny	Sunny	Sunny	Sunny
81	68	67	77	83	87	85
50	42	44	46	48	39	44