

Sixth person dies of COVID-19 in Grant County

OHA vaccine clinic planned May 24-28

Blue Mountain Eagle

COVID-19 has claimed another life in Grant County. The Grant County Health Department reported Thursday an 89-year-old man who resided in Grant County died at his residence. (The health department corrected an original report that stated he died at a hospital.)

The death will show up on the Oregon Health Authority COVID-19 database between today and early next week, the health department said. This is the sixth COVID-19-related death reported by the health department in Grant County. The fifth death was an 89-year-old man who tested positive April 12 and

died May 5 at his residence. The fourth death was an 87-year-old woman who died at St. Charles Medical Center in Bend March 23. The third death was a 63-year-old woman who died at St. Charles Medical Center March 23. The second death was an 81-year-old woman who died at St. Charles Medical Center March 19. The first death was an 87-year-old woman who died at home Nov. 15.

Grant County reported 12 new COVID-19 cases in the last week.

OHA vaccine clinic planned May 24-28

The Oregon Health Authority will conduct drop-in COVID-19 vaccination clinics May 24-28 at the Grant County Fairgrounds. The clinics are from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. May 24-27 and from noon to 6 p.m. May 28.

Anyone 15 and older can receive a vaccine. Children 12 to 14 can also receive the vaccination with a parental consent form, which is available on the Grant County Health Department website, communitycounselingsolutions.org. Pfizer and Moderna vaccines will be available. OHA will return in about four weeks to administer the second doses. For more information, call the health department at 541-575-0429.

Oregon to lift most virus restrictions when 70% of residents vaccinated

By Gary A. Warner
Oregon Capital Bureau

Gov. Kate Brown laid out some basic math on May 11 for Oregon's way out of pandemic restrictions: Get 70% of adult residents at least one shot of vaccine and "normalcy" can start to return as early as next month.

"Let's get this done, let's get our economy open, and enjoy the summer," Brown said during an afternoon press call.

Oregon Health Authority Director Pat Allen said the state needed to inoculate about 430,000 more people to reach the goal by June.

The announcement marked a major policy shift in which vaccination rate will now be the key measure of a county's ability to drop COVID-19 restrictions.

Individual counties could move out of restrictions even earlier under the new policy.

Counties could apply for the removal of restrictions this week if they can show 65% of residents 16 and older have started the vaccination process. If approved, restrictions could be curtailed starting May 21.

Counties must also submit a "vaccine equity" plan on how to get vaccine opportunities to people in underserved communities.

OHA officials said some counties with high vaccination rates and low infection counts, such as Clatsop County, could move out of the restrictions next week.

But the new emphasis on vaccination levels also meant counties such as Deschutes and Washington could move out of most restrictions despite high infection rates this week.

Deschutes County reported 542.6 cases per 100,000 people this week, the second highest of Oregon's larger counties behind only Klamath County.

Allen said that high vaccination rates were more important than high infection rates in determining progress against



Gov. Kate Brown, at a 2020 press event, wearing her social distancing mask in public.

PMG file photo

COVID-19. Even if infection rates are high, vaccination rates above 65% meant that cases were unlikely to result in severe illness or death.

On the flip side, if the state reaches a 70% overall vaccination rate, even counties such as Umatilla and Malheur, where vaccination rates are at the low end of the statewide scale, would move out of the restrictions along with all other counties.

Asked if meeting the 70% vaccination goal would likely mean that the Pendleton Round-Up could be held in September, Brown was upbeat.

"Let 'er buck," Brown forecast.

While the Centers for Disease Control may suggest some mask requirements, most likely the event would go off much closer to normal than forecast earlier. The Round-Up was cancelled last year because of COVID-19 concerns.

Brown said the moves were possible because data showing the most recent spike in cases over the past month has begun to fade.

"It looks like we've crossed the tipping point of the fourth surge," Brown said. "Our hospitalization rates have stabilized. Our infection rates are on

a downward trajectory. And in the race between vaccines and variants, our efforts to vaccinate Oregonians are taking the lead."

Brown said she was confident the statewide vaccination goal to reopen the entire state by mid-June was in reach if residents stepped up to get vaccinated and help others get their shots, too.

Oregon is increasing walk-in and local clinic efforts in an attempt to get what national infectious disease officials call "impulse vaccinations" by people who did not want to deal with the burden of prior online registration.

After achieving 70% statewide vaccination of those aged 16 and older, Oregon may continue requiring some use of masks and physical distancing, Brown said, as the CDC and Oregon Health Authority monitor conditions.

All other health and safety requirements for counties under the state's risk level framework would be lifted, and counties would no longer be assigned risk levels.

Oregon public schools would still follow the state's "Ready Schools, Safe Learners" protocols, which will be updated before the upcoming

return to school in the fall with an eye on removing those restrictions where possible with CDC guidance.

Brown's comments came as the University of Oregon and Western Oregon University announced this week that students would have to be vaccinated against COVID-19 in order to attend classes in person this fall. Oregon State University and Portland State University had announced the same policy earlier.

Face masks no longer required for the fully vaccinated in most places

Masks still required in hospitals, long-term care facilities

Blue Mountain Eagle

People who are fully vaccinated for COVID-19 are no longer required to wear masks in most places.

Gov. Kate Brown said Thursday that Oregon would be following new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control stating individuals who are fully vaccinated can stop wearing masks and social distancing.

"Oregonians now have a choice of how to protect themselves and others from COVID-19: Either get vaccinated, or continue wearing a mask and following physical distancing requirements," Brown said Thursday in a statement.

The CDC listed a few exceptions where masks are still recommended, including public transportation, hospitals, health care clinics,

correctional facilities and long-term care facilities, and Brown said masks and social distancing were still required in those places.

Brown said school guidelines were not changing this school year and that she expects students and staff to continue wearing masks and social distancing.

She said people who are immuno-compromised should continue to follow the recommendations of their health care providers.

Brown said the Oregon Health Authority will be providing updated guidance for businesses, employers and others to allow the option of lifting masking requirements after verifying vaccination status.

"Some businesses may prefer to simply continue operating under the current guidance for now, rather than worrying about verifying vaccination status, and that's fine," she said.

Visit covidvaccine.oregon.gov for more information and resources.

REPORTER

The Blue Mountain Eagle, a family-owned weekly newspaper in a stunningly beautiful Oregon community, seeks an energetic, dedicated reporter.

The Eagle is located in John Day, where seeing deer in front yards is normal and traffic is unheard of, just three hours from Bend and Pendleton. Surrounded by scenic forests and dissected by mountain streams, the location offers year-round recreational opportunities, including fishing, hunting, backpacking, camping, snowmobiling and horseback riding.

Despite the picturesque environment, the community is at the center of an evolving natural resource restoration economy, which gains statewide and even national attention.

Despite the small-town charm, the residents are engaged and politically active in local and national debates, and hard-hitting stories are never hard to find. Ongoing topics include state and federal policies, forest health, logging, public lands grazing, water supply, wildlife habitat improvements and wildfire resilience, in addition to coverage of small-town life and local government. The position offers a wealth of breaking news and enterprise opportunities.

Serving the community for more than 150 years, the Eagle is the oldest weekly newspaper in Oregon and is part of EO Media Group, an award-winning and innovative news organization with an active family of owners. This position offers excellent advancement opportunities in a company that prefers to hire from within. EO Media Group owns 13 newspapers and journals that provide accurate, fair and timely reporting about the people and issues impacting the communities we serve in the Pacific Northwest, reflecting the responsibility and spirit of a free press.


We seek a journalist who is passionate about local news and excited about the opportunity to publish in print, online and through social media. Candidates must be able to develop story ideas, take photographs, develop sources, prepare website and social media updates and work in a cooperative team environment. Journalistic integrity is a must.

Journalism education or experience is required for this full-time (37.5 hours per week) position. Benefits include health insurances, paid time off, and a 401(k)/401(k)Roth retirement plan. To apply, go to <https://eomediagroup.applicantpro.com/jobs/>, and upload resume, letter of interest and three or more clips.



195 N. Canyon Blvd.
John Day, Oregon

S241539-1



BABY STEPS


Birth & Beyond

We believe having a baby means so much more than just labor and delivery. Prenatal classes help parents feel calm and confident with the birthing process, while reducing the duration of labor. Parents also gain a profound awareness of the importance of their role. The first 1,000 days of a child's life provide the foundation for success in school and in life.


This prenatal class will cover:

- Touring the family birthing unit
- Prenatal and postpartum nutrition
- Relief of common discomforts during pregnancy
- Creating a birth plan
- Stages of Labor
- Comfort Measures & relaxation tools during labor

Please call
FAMILIES FIRST
to register, 541-575-1006



For more information
CALL 541-575-1006



Families First
PARENT RESOURCE CENTER

Teresa Aasness ffedta@gmail.com or Katrina Randleas ffhvkat@gmail.com

S226597-1