

County stays in "extreme risk" category

The Columbia Press

Clatsop County will stay in the "extreme risk" category for at least two more weeks, state leaders decided, after there was little improvement in the number of people contracting the coronavirus.

During the prior seven days, which ended Wednesday, the county reported 25 new cases for a total of 738 since the pandemic began. Sixteen people have been hospitalized; five have died. The rest have recovered or are recovering.

Gov. Kate Brown made the risk category announcement Tuesday, a continuation of restrictions that have been in effect for the previous two weeks.

The county's rate of new COVID-19 cases exceeded the state's threshold of 200 per 100,000 population for the Jan. 10-23 period. Twenty-four other Oregon counties also fall in the "extreme risk" category.

Restrictions through at least Feb. 12 include no indoor dining for eating and drinking establishments and no indoor visitation at long-term care facilities. Theaters, bowling alleys and gyms must largely remain closed.

Some modifications have been made to the restrictions this go-around. For instance, indoor activities for a maximum of six people at facilities larger than 500 square feet are allowed for everything except dining.

For facilities smaller than 500 square feet, the new guidance allows for one-to-one customer experiences, such as personal training.

The state introduced the risk level metric (low, moderate, high and extreme) in November to impose business and social restrictions based on each county's infection rates measured over two-week periods.

Statewide, there have been 140,063 cases as of Wednesday



Courtesy Clatsop County

Registered Nurse Betsy Brenden administers a vaccine to David Martinez, an Oregon State Police trooper, during a clinic at Columbia Memorial Hospital.

and 1,924 deaths.

VACCINATIONS IN OREGON

Oregon had administered 340,369 first and second doses of COVID-19 vaccines, as of Wednesday. More than 600,000 doses have been delivered to sites across the state, according to Oregon Health Authority.

Clatsop County had innoculated just over 2,500 people, or about 4.5 percent of the population.

Oregon's ongoing response to the pandemic has been among the most effective nationally, as measured in pre-

venting the loss of life through statewide measures, according to OHA Director Patrick Allen.

"Oregon has outperformed nearly all other states in containing the COVID-19 virus and preventing ... deaths," he said. "As of Jan. 27, the state ranks fifth lowest in deaths per 100,000 persons in the country, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention."

VACCINATION SURVEY

A vaccine task force set up by the county is asking citizens to help in the planning effort by filling out an online survey.

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The survey does not register those who respond for an appointment, but helps plan the most effective and efficient distribution.

Participants will be asked to give their name, age, contact information, and any underlying medical conditions. Depending on the survey, some will be asked about their place of employment. Surveys also are available in Spanish.

The information will help in scheduling vaccination events and provide organizers with contact information to inform citizens of upcoming clinics when they're eligible.

The surveys are on the county website, co.clatsop.or.us.

VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT

Clatsop County seeks volunteers to staff its COVID-19 call center.

Volunteers will perform multiple tasks including test scheduling, answering questions, and assisting citizens in making appointments.

People with customer service experience and good phone etiquette especially are urged to apply; training will be provided. Due to the nature of

the information that the call center will handle, a criminal background verification is required.

Volunteer shifts are 1 1/2 to two hours during the day.

Sign up to volunteer on the county's website, co.clatsop.or.us or send an email to hr@co.clatsop.or.us.

STATES AND RESTRICTIONS

The personal-finance website WalletHub released rankings this week for states with the fewest and most restrictions. Oregon falls in the middle.

The company compared the states across 14 metrics ranging from whether restaurants are open to whether the state has required face masks in public and workplace temperature screenings.

States with the fewest restrictions are, in order, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Iowa, Arkansas, Florida, Utah, Missouri, Wisconsin, Alaska, and South Carolina.

States with the most restrictions: California, Virginia, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Washington, Vermont, North Carolina, Hawaii and Illinois.

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