

## Healing:

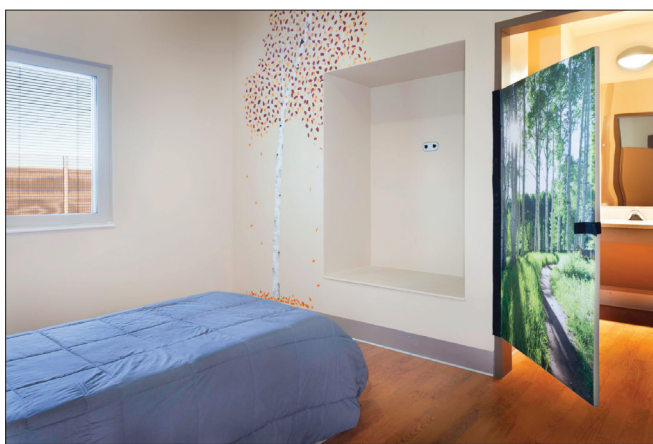
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their loved ones to inpatient mental health treatment in a secure facility because they didn't want them "locked up like a common criminal."

But when he toured Aspen Springs he was pleasantly surprised by how inviting the building was.

"I thought it would look like a jail," he said.

Instead, Aspen Springs is painted in warm colors, with paintings of aspen trees on each patient's private bedroom. Everything in the rooms is designed with patient safety in mind, such as the lightweight mats stuck to the wall with Vel-



Contributed photo by Cheryl McIntosh

**The 16 private patient rooms at Aspen Springs Psychiatric Hospital in Hermiston feature attached bathrooms with flexible mat doors that provide privacy without allowing people to barricade themselves inside.**

cro that provide privacy in their bathroom area but prevent them from barricading themselves inside. Patients

also have access to common areas, including a landscaped, fenced courtyard where they can get fresh

air, a reflection room and a common area where they can play games or watch television.

There are also private rooms where patients can meet with a therapists or family member.

Flatau said one of the benefits of someone being able to receive care in their own community is that their support system of friends and family is usually nearby.

That can help as they transition out of the hospital and into less intensive treatment.

During the June 24 ribbon-cutting ceremony, Dennis Burke, CEO of Good Shepherd Health Care System, told the audience that people in a mental health

crisis often end up in the hospital's emergency room. When that happened, it was not unusual for them to end up being transported across the state for the inpatient mental health care they need.

"Finding a place to put that individual is a challenge," he said.

He said Good Shepherd had looked at a lot of options for inpatient mental health care in the past, but recruiting professionals themselves proved difficult and when they looked at various private organizations "nothing felt right." He said they are excited about Lifeways' project and looking forward to working closely with Lifeways to provide future care.

Tim Hoekstra, CEO of Lifeways, said the organization's mission is to work with community partners to increase peoples' health and well-being.

"Aspen Springs will serve as an essential service to help our communities continue to develop a full continuum of care," he said. "We believe there is always hope for healing and well-being. We envision Aspen Springs Hospital being a safe port for those in need. We hope to be a new starting point for many in their journey toward healing and well-being."

For more information about Aspen Springs Psychiatric Hospital, visit [lifeways.org/aspen-springs](http://lifeways.org/aspen-springs) or call 541-289-2340.

# Wyden urges Oregonians to set a good example

By JADE MCDOWELL  
NEWS EDITOR

Eastern Oregon residents expressed to Sen. Ron Wyden during a June 25 virtual hall that many in their community are not taking COVID-19 precautions seriously despite rising case levels.

One Elgin woman referenced a quote by Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, that some Americans "don't believe in science and don't believe in authority."

"What steps can be taken to deliver COVID-19 info to people of this mindset?" she asked.

Wyden said while there is no simple answer, many people are more willing to trust their friends and neighbors than an expert in Washington, D.C. He said in a small community, people seeing their neighbors wearing a mask at the grocery store can have more of an effect than "handing out 10 papers by Tony Fauci."

"At a fundamental level, you cannot in effect force people — control — how everybody handles a pandemic," he said. "You just can't. But when you wear a mask where people see how important it is to you, and your family and friends, I personally think that makes a really big difference."

He said he wears a mask while around other people, based on the scientific evidence that doing so helps lower the risk of transmitting COVID-19. He encouraged everyone else to take it upon themselves to lead by example in their own circle.

"Talk to friends, talk to family, tell them why you believe in precautions, and why those precautions are important to you," he said.

In response to another question about COVID-19, Wyden said that "practical, common sense measures" like washing your hands shouldn't have anything to do with political parties. Wyden also talked about the need to increase testing and contact tracing, and said small community pharmacies like Murray Drug in Heppner should be part of

*"TALK TO FRIENDS, TALK TO FAMILY, TELL THEM WHY YOU BELIEVE IN PRECAUTIONS, AND WHY THOSE PRECAUTIONS ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU."*



Sen. Ron Wyden, addressing a question about how to change the mindset of people who won't take COVID-19 precautions

the solution in making testing available to everyone. He also said he was working to help get personal protective equipment, testing reagents and other supplies to Oregon.

Wyden said when a vaccine becomes available he wants to make sure it is affordable to everyone.

"As I've always felt with respect to pharmaceuticals, it's great to have the product, but if people can't afford to get the product, how did the innovations and the breakthrough really help people in their homes and in their communities?" he said.

He promised as a member of Congress that he would work to hold pharmaceutical companies accountable that in exchange for all of the federal funding they were receiving to research see COVID-19 and develop a vaccine or cure, there will be no "profiteering" off of the end result.

Other topics Wyden addressed at the town hall for Umatilla, Morrow, Union and Wallowa counties included the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, protecting the integrity of inspector general positions in federal agencies, problems with the Oregon Employment Department's system for disbursing unemployment benefits, and the importance of a strong meat inspection program.

He said when the United States is no longer dealing with the physical and economic effects of the pandemic, he wants to see the country create a national strategic food reserve to prepare for future crises.

Wyden also addressed a question from a viewer about voting by mail, a topic he frequently tweets about. He said since the COVID-

19 outbreak the need for all Americans to be able to vote by mail has moved from an academic question to an issue of public health.

Wyden, a Democrat, said he was the country's first senator elected completely by mail, and that former senator from Oregon Gordon Smith, a Republican, was the second, proving that members of both parties can be elected through a vote-by-mail system. He also pushed back on Sen. Mitch McConnell's claims that expanding mail-in ballots would encourage fraud.

"The late (Oregon Secretary of State) Dennis Richardson, who was a Republican, a conservative, he actually wrote Donald Trump and said 'Oregon just hasn't seen it,' and that's because we have been so strong in opposing the kinds of things that could generate fraud," Wyden said.

He said some in Washington, D.C. want to "suffocate" the U.S. Postal Service to profit off of privatizing the service or to prevent voting by mail. But he said the postal service provides medications and other important supplies to rural Americans who can't access them locally.

"I don't think rural Oregon, or rural America, can afford not to have this lifeline," he said.

## COVID:

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among Umatilla County residents is to be expected," the department stated in a news release. "UCo Health encourages Umatilla County residents to continue to prioritize your physical and mental health during this time."

The department continues to warn residents that many cases of COVID-19 are being traced to workplaces, and that no one should go into work while experiencing any symptoms of the virus. The county has also urged employers to not pressure employees to come in while sick.

On June 29, Shearer's Foods announced that six employees of its Hermiston processing plant have tested positive for COVID-19.

"The safety of the Shearer's products, employees, and community remains their top priority," the news release stated. "As a result, the facility will be closed for 24 hours to conduct a deep cleaning of all equipment based on CDC guidelines and using EPA-approved registered products for COVID-19."

The company stated that all employees would continue to receive their pay and benefits during the shutdown and if they needed to quarantine. Employees who worked in close contact with those who tested positive have been notified and asked to self-quarantine for 14 days.

According to the company, the employees who got sick were not in contact with products at the facility and "there is no food safety risk." The company will continue to take temperatures of employees arriving at work, require social distancing, practice increased sanitation and require personal protective equipment.

On June 26, when Umatilla County's hospital-

izations reached six people, Good Shepherd Health Care System announced it was reinstating its incident command system used for emergencies.

"We have temporarily moved our Treatment Center and Good Shepherd Cancer Center services to the Day Surgery wing in our Surgical Services Department and the original space those services occupied on Unit C is now a dedicated COVID-19 unit," CEO Dennis Burke said in a statement.

According to a news release, the unit has 12 beds for COVID-19 patients, and four more can be added temporarily to the surgical unit for overflow. Burke said Good Shepherd is "judiciously monitoring" personal protective equipment and other supplies to make sure the hospital will be prepared in the event of an influx of patients.

Patients can continue to expect to be screened before entering buildings, to see social distancing maintained inside and to be limited to one visitor per person in most cases where the patient does not have COVID-19. Education classes continue to be online, and the pharmacy and home medical equipment shop continue to offer curbside pickup or free home delivery.

The treatment center and cancer center are in a temporary location in the surgical services department on the main floor of the hospital near the day surgery entrance.

In response to what she said was an "alarming rate" of spread in both urban and rural counties, Gov. Kate Brown announced on Monday, June 29 that starting Wednesday, July 1, all Oregon residents over the age of 12 will be required to wear a covering over their nose and mouth in indoor public spaces, such as stores, gyms, restaurants and public transportation. The covering can take the

form of a mask or a clear plastic face shield.

The state is putting the Occupational Health and Safety Administration, or OSHA, in charge of enforcement of the rules rather than police.

"Modeling from the Oregon Health Authority shows that if we don't take further action to reduce the spread of the disease, our hospitals could be overwhelmed by new COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations within weeks," Brown said in a statement. "The choices every single one of us make in the coming days matter ... If we all wear face coverings, practice six feet of physical distancing in public, wash our hands regularly, and stay home when we are sick, then we can avoid the worst-case scenarios that are now playing out in other states."

She said she did not want to have to close down businesses again as some states have started to do when their hospitals near capacity, and said that if Oregonians don't want to see local shops and restaurants closed they can help prevent that by wearing a mask and social distancing.

"Please keep your Fourth of July celebrations small and local," she said. "We saw a lot of new COVID-19 cases following the Memorial Day holiday. Another spike in cases after the upcoming holiday weekend could put Oregon in a dangerous position."

The Oregon Health Authority will hold a live question and answer session about the mask requirement on its Facebook page at 12:30 p.m. on July 1, which will also be available for viewing afterward.

As of June 30, OHA had reported 8,656 cases of COVID-19 and 207 deaths. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have reported more than 2.58 million cases and 126,739 deaths nationwide.

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