

New workplaces join list of COVID-19 outbreaks

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

Umatilla County's rising COVID-19 cases continue to touch more workplaces in the area, as the county passed the 1,000-case mark over the weekend of July 11-12.

As of Tuesday, July 14, Umatilla County reported 1,073 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 66 presumptive cases. After hitting a high of 17 hospitalizations on Friday, July 10, the county was at 12 hospitalized cases on July 14.

An eighth Umatilla County resident who was positive for COVID-19 died on July 8, according to Umatilla County Public Health. The person was a 54-year-old man who died at his residence.

Oregon Health Authority continues to report worksite outbreaks in a report released each Wednesday. The outbreaks on the list have at least 30 people at the worksite and have at least five cases linked to that worksite, through employees testing positive and close contacts of those employees testing positive after they do.

Atkinson Staffing in Hermiston was added to the Oregon Health Authority's list of outbreaks for July 8, with 13 cases linked to the company.

Owner Michael Atkinson said he had previously brought in a company to test all employees, and at that point no one tested positive, but since then there have been cases.

He said Atkinson Staffing has a "very generous" COVID-19 sick



Barbara Dickerson protests in support of stronger COVID-19 precautions in prisons outside of Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in Pendleton on Friday, July 10, 2020. Dickerson's husband is an inmate at EOCI who tested positive for COVID-19.

Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

leave policy because he doesn't want anyone to feel that they must come to work sick to be able to support themselves. He said people are paid to stay home from the time they start showing symptoms until whatever quarantine period their doctor or the county health department asked them to follow is up.

The nature of a staffing agency, where people come in looking for work and are sent on temporary work assignments in various locations, can mean more exposure to the community than some workplaces. But Atkinson said they are doing what they can, includ-

ing paying people to stay home if they were exposed to someone who tested positive, sanitizing everything regularly and closing down the office so that people can only come in for a one-on-one appointment.

"We've got people working from home that I wouldn't have thought could work from home," he said.

Atkinson said so far all but a couple of the employees who have tested positive have experienced only mild symptoms.

Lamb Weston's potato processing plant in Hermiston remained on

the Oregon Health Authority's list of outbreaks for a third week, with 115 cases linked to the worksite as of July 8.

Lamb Weston spokeswoman Shelby Stoolman said in an email that the plant was closed for three weeks after the company learned of its first four cases on June 15.

"Since June 15, our staff have been at home with pay as we have done everything we can to understand the outbreak and how to bring our team back safely," she said on July 8. "Today, we brought back a limited staff of about 30 people to begin reopening."

Columbia River Processing, a subsidiary of Tillamook in Boardman, remained on the list for a second week in a row with 22 cases. Oregon Potato Company in Boardman remained on the list with 11 cases. Hill Meat Company remained on the list with seven cases. Shearer's Foods in Hermiston was added to the Oregon Health Authority's list for the first time with 11 cases, but had previously sent out a news release about its first six cases.

Medelez Trucking and Good Shepherd Health Care System in Hermiston, Umatilla County's first two worksites to land on OHA's list in June, have both moved to the "resolved outbreaks" list after going more than 30 days without a new case linked to them.

Two Rivers Correctional Institution in Umatilla had five cases linked to it as of July 8.

Jennifer Black, communications manager at Oregon Department of Corrections, said they will continue to test inmates who display COVID-19 symptoms, screen employees, and sanitize common areas.

"The health of our employees and the people we incarcerate is our highest priority," Black said.

Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in Pendleton had its first inmate test positive on July 8, according to a news release. As of July 13, the prison was reporting 16 inmates and three staff had tested positive.

Hermiston Herald reporter Nada Sewidan contributed to this report.

Cancer center offers online classes

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

The Tri-Cities Cancer Center, which has a satellite office in Hermiston, is offering free virtual classes to the community.

Jennifer Hamilton, an oncology esthetician, is teaching "Skin Care for Cancer Conquerors" on Friday, July 17 from 10-11 a.m.

The class will discuss skin care for patients going through chemotherapy or radiation treat-

ment, or recently finished. Topics will include which products are safe to use, sun protection and avoiding rashes, dry skin or acne breakouts.

Register by calling call 509-737-3427 or visit tccancer.org/event/free-community-presentation-skin-care-for-cancer-conquerors-virtual. The class is free, but registration is required to receive a link to the Zoom meeting.

Doctors Lee Ostler from The Center for Dental Health and Guy

Jones of the Tri-Cities Cancer Center will teach "Oral Health in Cancer Care" on Thursday, July 23, from 4-5 p.m.

The class will cover how to maintain good oral care, nutrition and hygiene during cancer treatments, including how to address oral side effects of the treatments.

Register by calling call 509-737-3427 or visit tccancer.org/event/free-community-presentation-oral-health-in-cancer-care-virtual-class.

OSHA has online reporting form

HERMISTON HERALD

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is encouraging workers and members of the public to use its online reporting tool when reporting workplace hazards.

According to a news release from OSHA, the agency is processing high numbers of complaints related to COVID-19, and while people can still call in, the online reporting form in English and Spanish is a quicker way to bring the complaint to their attention.

Michael Wood, administrator for Oregon OSHA, said "Our online system is faster at absorbing complaints and allowing us to efficiently respond to them."

Gov. Kate Brown has designated OSHA, rather than law enforcement, as the main enforcement agency for COVID-19 rules, such as keeping customers 6 feet apart and requiring people to wear a mask in indoor public spaces.

For more information about OSHA or to report a workplace complaint of any kind, visit osha.oregon.gov.



Welcome Family Medicine
Physician,
David Shanley, MD

Dr. Shanley is welcoming new patients, 6 months and older, for all their primary care needs at Good Shepherd's Primary Care Clinic. Dr. Shanley brings over 20 years of Family Medicine expertise, treating a large variety of different health conditions that will benefit his patients.

"I am happy to fulfill the need of primary care in Hermiston and the surrounding communities, and look forward to positively impacting the health and well-being for patients of all ages, through all stages of life."

- Dr. Shanley

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