

PRESS RELEASE



For Immediate Release
March 27, 2020

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Oregon Legislature Future Caucus Highlights Coronavirus Risk for Younger Oregonians

People ages 20-44 made up 20% of people hospitalized for coronavirus

SALEM – Today, the members of Oregon’s bipartisan, bicameral Future Caucus, a group of younger state legislators, highlight the risk among younger Oregonians for contracting coronavirus, and call on everyone to follow one simple, lifesaving measure to combat COVID-19: Stay home. Save lives.

This means no gatherings of friends during this time – even outdoor gatherings are prohibited if they are with people you do not live with. People can be contagious for several days before experiencing symptoms. If you are an asymptomatic carrier of COVID-19 and continue to go out and live your life as usual, you can spread the disease and get more people sick, including those you love and care for.

“There has been so much messaging about how coronavirus is only seriously impacting older people, but one in five confirmed cases in Oregon are people under the age of 40, so it’s clear that people our age are at risk,” said Daniel Bonham (R-The Dalles).

As of March 27, 21 percent of [diagnosed cases in Oregon](#) have been in people under the age of 40, and 10 percent of patients under 40 have required hospitalization. This means that in Oregon, one in ten younger adults who contract COVID-19 have required hospital-level care. Nationally, [according to the CDC](#), as of March 16, people ages 20 to 44 made up 29 percent of diagnosed cases, 20 percent of people hospitalized for coronavirus, and 12 percent of those being treated for coronavirus in intensive care units.

On Monday, Governor Brown issued an order requiring Oregonians to stay home unless engaging in essential tasks: grocery shopping, pharmacy pick-ups, traveling to/from work. If you do leave home, you must keep six feet of distance between yourself and others.

“There is a lot of information coming out from elected leaders and public health authorities, but we’re concerned that this information is not reaching younger people who have a critical role to play in flattening the curve and fighting the spread of this disease in our communities,” said Rep. Julie Fahey (D-Eugene/Junction City), a co-Chair of the Future Caucus.

“It’s no secret that a fairly large percentage of young people get their news from social media, but that doesn’t mean they’re following any of us legislators, or sources that disseminate accurate information,” said Sen. Dallas Heard (R-Roseburg), another of the Caucus’s co-Chairs.

“The Governor’s partnership with Wieden + Kennedy is a step in the right direction as the onus is on us as elected leaders to create easily digestible content that informs, is actionable, and builds consensus amongst this demographic,” said Rep. Lawrence Spence (D-Portland). It’s imperative that we help them take ownership of their place in stopping this pandemic.”

There are many young people on the frontlines of this pandemic – young people who are working as grocery clerks, janitors, hospital housekeeping, healthcare professionals, emergency responders, and delivery persons. “A majority of young people are very aware of the risk to their health and personal well-being and continue to do their part to support our communities and fight COVID-19,” said Rep. Jack Zika (R-Redmond). “We’re simply concerned that some students and young professionals aren’t getting the message, and they’re not taking seriously the risk of the disease and the importance of the social distancing measures.”

“This is a great time to identify creative ways to connect with your friends and loved ones, like virtual happy hours or online games. Share on social media how you’re practicing safe social distancing, and encourage them to do the same. We need young people to be advocates for following the guidelines,” said Rep. Anna Williams (D-Hood River).

“The actions we take today - all of us, including young people like my three daughters - will have real and significant impacts on the spread of the virus in our state. I know that it feels hard and challenging, but by staying home today we’re protecting our friends, grandparents and neighbors,” said Rep. Shelly Boshart Davis (R-Albany). “We literally have the power to save lives.”

“We are all in this together and we must act in ways that protect the most vulnerable among us,” said Rep. Courtney Neron (D-Sherwood/Wilsonville).

Oregon’s Future Caucus is a group of state legislators under 42, who are committed to working together across party lines to address the issues that matter most to younger Americans. Oregon is one of 27 states that are a part of [Millennial Action Project’s](#) State Future Caucus Network.

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