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## Oregon House District 60 Newsletter

Issue #4

News & Information on COVID-19 in Oregon

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Friends,

I know each day during this unprecedented time brings new challenges and new information to digest. I will continue to share the information I have available and welcome any additional questions you may have. Below are some updates from the legislature and announcements from the Governor's office. For the most up-to-date information visit [www.healthoregon.org/coronavirus](http://www.healthoregon.org/coronavirus).

There are still ZERO confirmed cases in any of the counties in House District 60. Some have suggested this may be from a lack of testing. I am providing information based on the Oregon Health Authority's (OHA) assessment and reporting.

The OHA reported 13 additional confirmed cases this morning, for a total of 88 confirmed cases, including two unfortunate COVID-19-related deaths, one in Washington County and one in Lane County, for a total of three in Oregon to-date.

The Joint Special Committee on Coronavirus Response met yesterday. You can watch that committee meeting [here](#). The committee is planning to meet again on Friday the 20<sup>th</sup>, but a time has not been set yet.

**Two of the state's most prominent voices for our small businesses and industries provided presentations to the Committee you may find valuable:**

[Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association Presentation](#)

[Oregon Business and Industry Presentation](#)

## New Social Distancing Measures

### Higher Education

- The Governor has issued an Executive Order for higher education institutions in Oregon to suspend in-person instructional activity beginning March 21st--April 28th.
- Proposed exceptions are for courses required for the completion of a healthcare-related certificate or program.
- Institutions are encouraged to migrate to online or a remote learning modality.
- Students will be encouraged to depart campuses and dorm rooms if other options are available in order to avoid crowding.
- Universities will be allowed to operate dorms at a minimal level for students who do not have housing alternatives.
- Every college in the public sector with dorms and dining facilities will continue some level of operation.

- Guidance is being developed around steps needed to be taken to promote greater levels of social distancing in these settings.
- The Higher Education Coordinating Commission will be assessing the potential impacts on enrollment as a result of the Coronavirus crisis.
- Since higher education is primarily student-funded, enrollment declines could have serious consequences on institutional budgets.

## Public Health Response

### Hospital Coordination

- The Joint Task Force on Health Care System Response is working to manage demand and grow health care capacity.
- A mobile hospital facility is being set up at the State Fairgrounds in Salem to act as a location for step down, hospital diversion or recovery care.
- Oregon Health Authority is looking into how many currently unlicensed hospital beds we can put into use.
- OHA is also exploring the possibility of converting places such as hotels or dorm rooms into health care capacity.
- The health care system may require a staffing lift and new resources to hire people to staff necessary jobs.
- Task Forces are meeting today, tomorrow, and Friday and will come back with recommendations for building new health care capacity, particularly for ICU beds.
- Projections are that we will need 1,000 additional beds to meet the surge.
- Non-emergency medical procedures are being put off to save on personal protective equipment and to free up facilities and staff. This includes all Oregon hospitals, out-patient clinics, veterinarians, and dentists.

### Medical Workforce

- Oregon is accessing local Medical Reserve Corps and ServeOR, groups comprised of former health care professionals to bolster the workforce.

### Childcare

- As part of the new guidance for school districts, the Governor is asking schools to come up with plans to offer childcare for the children of health care workers and first responders.

### Emergency Management Command Structure

- A Unified Command Structure has been established utilizing the All Hazards organizational structure.
- This is the same structure that would be utilized during a Cascadia Event.
- 60 people are working in the Emergency Coordination Center.

### Testing and Supplies

- Commercial Labs began reporting on COVID-19 tests on Monday. Oregon now can conduct between 1,000-1,500 tests per week. Director Allen is hoping that capacity could rise to 2,000 test per week soon.
- Supplies of Personal Protective Equipment are still critical.
- Oregon has received 10% of our request for PPE from the Federal Government. Another 15% of that request should be on its way.
- Oregon has already used 28 percent of our supply of N95 Masks, 66% of our supply of surgical masks, and 83% of our supply of gowns.
- Steps are being taken to reduce the use of PPE as well as finding additional sources of PPE.

## Economic Impacts

### Economic Outlook

- The Coronavirus Economic Recovery Council met for the first time Tuesday You can find the council's charter and membership [here](#).
- The Council will be addressing immediate, short term, and long term needs. They will be working on an ongoing needs assessment and identifying gaps.
- Regional Recovery Teams will be deployed through the state's Regional Solutions structure.
- According to the Governor's Office, it is still too early to determine the full economic damages Oregon will face during this crisis.
- The Governor's Office believes general fund tax receipts will drop significantly and this it is important that we be careful regarding state finances until we know more of the economic impacts
- A coordinated group including financial experts from both the legislative and executive branches will be established to focus on the statewide financial impacts faced by Oregon as a result of the Coronavirus crisis.
- May 20th is when the next revenue forecast is planned.
- The Oregon Department of Revenue has posted guidance for taxpayers for seeking exemptions and relief.

### **Relief of Business**

- Businesses are saying that cash flow is their biggest issue. Businesses need money to pay employees and keep their doors open.
- Businesses are asking to delay the implementation of the Corporate Activities Tax to ensure businesses can pay employees and bills.
- Easing up on several state regulations would go a long way in assisting Oregon businesses.
- The Small Business Administration has modified its requirements for a statewide declaration. A request has been submitted and Oregon should hear back from the SBA tomorrow. All counties in Oregon should then have access to funds through the SBA.

### **Housing**

- The Governor's Office believes that we should explore the possibility of providing rental assistance and maybe even mortgage assistance in tandem with a moratorium on evictions to help keep people housed during the crisis.
- It will be necessary to look up the entire chain to ensure that landlords who rely on rent to pay their mortgages are protected.

### **Unemployment Insurance and Workers Comp**

- In expanding and extending Unemployment Insurance, we have to ensure that whatever changes are made do not have an impact on the matching funds Oregon receives from the federal government.
- Many employers are now seeking unemployment benefits, some for the first time. The website is facing issues due to the federal database being overloaded, but that is being worked on.
- Guidance is being worked on for health care workers and first responders to have workers' compensation layered into their benefit structure.
- Oregon is working with SAIF and self-insured employers to move the market into a presumption of industrial exposure for health care workers and first responders for COVID-19.
- Several groups fall through the cracks for UI coverage. Oregon is looking into protection for Independent Contractors and LLC owners who do not have UI insurance coverage withheld.
- Businesses have suggested diverting the Corporate Kicker into bolstering the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

### **At the National level:**

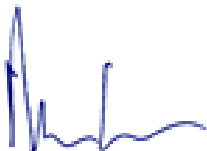
- The U.S. and Canada have mutually agreed to close their shared border to nonessential travel.
- President Trump has invoked the Defense Production Act.
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development is halting foreclosures and evictions for families with FHA-insured mortgages.
- The Department of Labor announced up to \$100 million in dislocated worker grants in response to the Coronavirus national health emergency.
- The White House worked with the private sector to launch a central website where families, students, and educators can access online education technologies.
- The President launched a partnership with the Ad Council, media networks, and digital platforms to communicate public services announcements about the Coronavirus.
- The Navy will be deploying two medical ships to help support impacted areas.
- The President signed into law H.R. 6201, the "Families First Coronavirus Response Act". The Act makes emergency supplemental appropriations and other changes to law to help the Nation respond to the Coronavirus outbreak.
- The CDC has awarded nearly \$7.3 million to the State of Oregon to support response efforts to the Coronavirus outbreak. Earlier this month, the CDC provided an initial \$500,000 to Oregon for the same purpose.

Also, I just want to remind everyone that while my District Office in Ontario is closed to walk-in traffic, we are continuing to work for District 60 residents full-time, and we are happy to assist you [via email](#) or phone at 541-889-8866.

I have also set up a "[Coronavirus in Oregon](#)" page on my personal website to share sources of reliable information and to help guide people to the right resources.

If you have questions related to COVID-19, whether business or personal, please contact us and we will get back to you as soon as possible. We will continue sending more updates on Oregon's COVID-19 response as they come in.

Stay safe everyone.



Representative Mark Owens  
House District 60  
*Frontier Oregon—The Best Part of the State*

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