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Governor Kate Brown Announces Updates to the County Watch List

October 09, 2020

Salem, OR—Governor Kate Brown today announced that Umatilla County has been added to the County Watch List. This addition comes after Umatilla County was removed from the Watch List on September 18. The county remains in Phase 2 of reopening.

“This is the first time we have seen a county added back to the Watch List," said Governor Brown. "Combined with yesterday's record high statewide case count, this is a sign that we must tread cautiously or we risk losing the gains we've made in slowing the spread of COVID-19. My priority is getting kids in every county safely back in school—but that will become more and more difficult if COVID-19 case numbers spike.

"As with all counties that are added to the Watch List, the Oregon Health Authority is offering support and resources to help county officials reduce community spread. However, it remains up to all of us to do our part in preventing further spread. We must continue to wear face coverings, watch our physical distance, wash our hands often, and stay home if we're feeling sick."

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Counties are placed on the Watch List when COVID-19 is spreading quickly and public health officials cannot trace that spread to specific sources—creating a potentially dangerous dynamic. Specific markers of this rapid community spread include when there is a sporadic case rate of 50 or more per 100,000 people in the last two weeks and the county has had more than five sporadic cases in the last two weeks (sporadic cases are those that cannot be traced to a source; they indicate community spread). Counties

remain on the Watch List for a minimum of three weeks and until their sporadic case rates drop below these thresholds.

The County Watch List allows the state to prioritize resources and assistance to counties that are seeing the broadest spread of COVID-19. When a county is placed on the Watch List, the Oregon Health Authority increases monitoring and communication, and deploys additional technical assistance and resources, such as epidemiological support, case investigation, and contact tracing help.

Governor Brown added, "Together, all of us play a part in helping keep our friends, families, and neighbors safe and healthy. With cold and flu season approaching, it's also a great time to get your flu shot, to help make sure our frontline health care workers have the bed capacity and resources they need to continue treating COVID-19 patients."

The complete County Watch List (https://oregon.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=41b11f32beefba0380ee8ecb5&id=8799975e29&e=8b2ce66d7f) now includes the following four counties: Benton, Clatsop, Malheur, and Umatilla.

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