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# Governor Kate Brown Announces Plans for Face Covering Requirement, Outlines Next Steps in County Reopening Process

June 17, 2020

*Press availability scheduled for 11 am, Thursday, June 18*

Portland, OR—Governor Kate Brown released the following statement today:

“Last week I issued a statewide pause on all county applications to move into Phase 1 or Phase 2. This meant holding off on reviewing the reopening applications from Hood River, Marion, Multnomah, and Polk Counties.

“I instituted the statewide pause because of the rising number of cases in both rural and urban communities. I did this to give public health experts time to assess what factors are driving the spread of the virus and make adjustments to our reopening strategy.

“Since then, the Oregon Health Authority has continued to analyze data in the state, including the source of the growth in new cases, hospitalizations, results of contact

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tracing and other metrics. Additionally, I have consulted with independent health experts, business leaders, and local elected officials. Today, I am announcing the following four decisions:

“First, I will be instituting a requirement to wear face coverings while in indoor public spaces, such as grocery stores and other businesses, for the following counties: Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, Hood River, Marion, Polk, and Lincoln. This mandate will be effective beginning Wednesday, June 24.

“Second, I am moving Marion, Polk, and Hood River Counties to Phase 2 beginning Friday, June 19. Marion and Polk Counties are seeing a decline in hospitalizations, and Hood River has had only one new hospital admission in the past two weeks. All three counties have implemented timely follow up on cases in the past week.

“Third, I am allowing Multnomah County to move to Phase 1 starting Friday, June 19. While Multnomah County has seen an increase in new cases recently, the county has not experienced an uptrend in new hospital admissions, and overall hospitalizations remain well within capacity.

“Finally, I will be grouping several counties together as regional units for future reopening decisions. This will apply to the tri-county area––Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas Counties will be treated as a single unit in future reopening decisions. And Marion and Polk Counties, which each include parts of the City of Salem, will also be treated as a unit going forward. Both of these regions include a highly-connected urban area, making it difficult to monitor the disease based solely on the contours of county jurisdictional lines.

“As a result of these decisions, the entire tri-county region will remain in Phase 1 for at least 21 days after June 19 before the three counties together will become eligible for Phase 2. I know this impacts communities and businesses in Clackamas and Washington counties but, as we reopen our state, we must recognize how interconnected the metro area is.

“The next few weeks will be difficult, and we will be monitoring the data regularly. We are much better prepared than we were in early March. We have increased PPE, much more widespread testing, and many more contact tracers.

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“However, if hospitalizations spike too rapidly, if the capacity of our health care system is threatened, we will be forced to revert to stricter rules.

“Our entire ability to reopen and stay open is dependent on whether each of us follows basic health and safety protections. Stay home if you feel sick, wear a face covering, keep six feet of distance, avoid crowds, and wash your hands regularly. We truly are all in this together.”

Governor Brown released a video statement along with this press statement, which is available here (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wApghmOOZxs) .

The Governor’s Office also provided a more detailed update (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aYBj6V6dWUTMPXB7YQUoJ1X8FNtcJlOq/view) from the Oregon Health Authority on the trends in cases of COVID-19 in Oregon.

**Governor Brown will hold a press availability tomorrow, June 18, at 11:00 am. She will be joined by representatives from the Oregon Health Authority.**

Members of the media must RSVP for call-in information by emailing our office at Governors.Press@oregon.gov (mailto:Governors.Press@oregon.gov?subject=RE:%20). A live stream will be available for the public here (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZIaVMS6_Ns&feature=youtu.be) . Spanish and American Sign Language (ASL) simulcasts will also be available.

Teleconference information will be provided to all reporters who RSVP to participate remotely. Thank you for working with us to ensure the health and safety of all participants. Please RSVP by 9 am so we can ensure you receive the call-in information before the press conference begins.

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