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Governor Kate Brown Announces Updates to the County Watch List

September 03, 2020

Morrow and Umatilla Counties to Remain in Phase 1

Salem, OR—Governor Kate Brown today announced that Baker County has succeeded in reducing the spread of COVID-19 sufficiently enough to be removed from the County Watch List. In addition, the Governor announced a new prerequisite for counties entering Phase 2, and that Morrow and Umatilla Counties will remain in Phase 1.

- County Watch List

“I want to commend county officials and community members in Baker County for their efforts in curbing community spread of COVID-19," said Governor Brown. "Their work in reducing community transmission warrants removal from the Watch List, and is a good reminder of how we can reduce the spread of this disease if we work together."

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

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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.

No counties have been added to the Watch List this week. The complete County Watch List (https://oregon.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=41b11f32beefba0380ee8ecb5&id=94a1c7a66b&e=8b2ce66d7f) now includes the following: Jackson, Jefferson, Malheur, Morrow, and Umatilla Counties.

- County Updates

After consultation with the Oregon Health Authority, a new prerequisite for entering Phase 2 has been announced. The original prerequisites for Phase 2 were based on trend-based metrics. At that time, counties had a relatively low infection rate. As reopening progressed, case counts have risen.

To reduce high case rates, a new prerequisite has been added to enter Phase 2. Counties with more than 100 cases must have their case counts reduced to 100 cases or less per 100,000 people per week.

- Morrow and Umatilla Counties

Over the past two weeks (Aug. 16-29), Morrow County has had a total of 46 cases—a rate of 362.7 per 100,000 people. In that same time frame, Umatilla County has had a total of 236 cases—a rate of 292.1 per 100,000 people. Both counties have also reporter several large workplace outbreaks.

Because of these high case counts, Morrow and Umatilla Counties will remain in Phase

OHA will be monitoring the spread of COVID-19 in these counties, as well as throughout the state, and stands ready to work with Morrow and Umatilla Counties should any concerns arise.

Governor Brown added, "This is a good reminder that this disease is still very much with us, and that all Oregonians play a part in helping keep their friends, families, and neighbors safe and healthy. We must continue to work together by physically distancing, wearing a face covering, staying home when sick, and washing our hands often."

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