An official website of the State of Oregon »

Governor Kate Brown Announces Updates to the County Watch List, Morrow County Approved for Phase 2

September 18, 2020

Umatilla and Morrow Counties Move Off Watch List

Salem, OR—Governor Kate Brown today announced that Umatilla and Morrow Counties have succeeded in reducing the spread of COVID-19 sufficiently enough to be removed from the County Watch List. She also announced that Morrow County's application to move to Phase 2 of reopening has been approved, effective immediately.

“I want to commend county officials and community members in Umatilla and Morrow Counties for stepping up and working together to reduce the spread of COVID-19," said Governor Brown. "The progress they have made in curbing community transmission shows that we can reduce the spread of this disease if we all do our part by wearing face coverings, watching our physical distance, washing our hands, staying home when sick, and avoiding large gatherings."

- County Watch List

An official website of the State of Oregon »
(http://www.oregon.gov)

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.

No counties have been added to the Watch List this week.

- Morrow County Approved for Phase 2

Over the past two weeks, Morrow County has had a total of 34 cases, for a rate of 268.1 per 100,000 people. The county has reported an average of 2.4 cases per day over the past two weeks. Only 11.7% of cases could not be traced to a known source. Due to the small population size of the county, a small number of cases (even an increase or decrease of one or two cases) can have a significant impact on the cases per 100,000. While Morrow County still must make additional progress in reducing its COVID-19 case count to fully meet all metrics for Phase 2, the county also lacks the types of facilities and large venues––bowling alleys and movie theaters, for example––that are eligible to reopen in Phase 2. In addition, restaurants in Morrow County are not large enough to benefit from the occupancy increases allowed with physical distancing requirements under Phase 2. However, the county's behavioral health provider cannot currently, by policy, allow in-person services in the county until Phase 2 of reopening. Given the need to increase access to vital behavioral health services, and the limited practical impact of moving to Phase 2 otherwise, Morrow County has been approved to move to Phase 2 of reopening.

Malheur County remains on the County Watch List (https://oregon.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=41b11f32beefba0380ee8ecb5&id=81a3059c85&e=8b2ce66d7f) . While county officials and community members have been working hard to stem the spread of COVID-19, Malheur County faces particular challenges, including the county's proximity to Idaho and the amount of travel back and forth across the state border. Idaho continues to have some of the highest rates of COVID-19 infections in the country, and the communities across the border from Malheur County are among the hardest hit by the virus. Bringing infection rates down in Malheur County will require state and local officials across the border to do their part as well.

The Oregon Health Authority continues to monitor the COVID-19 spread in Malheur County and remains in close communication with county officials. OHA will continue to monitor the spread of COVID-19 throughout the state, and stands ready to work with counties should any concerns arise. As noted in this week's Weekly Report (https://oregon.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=41b11f32beefba0380ee8ecb5&id=aa59c35cc7&e=8b2ce66d7f) from OHA, new cases of COVID-19 declined in the last week, as did the state's positivity rate––however the number of Oregonians tested also declined due to disruptions and delays caused by active wildfires.

Governor Brown added, "COVID-19 is still very much with us, and, 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."

Contact Information

For News Media

Liz Merah
503-877-8287
elizabeth.merah@oregon.gov (mailto:elizabeth.merah@oregon.gov)

Nikki Fisher
503-373-7480
nikki.fisher@oregon.gov (mailto:nikki.fisher@oregon.gov)

Charles Boyle
503-931-7773
Charles.boyle@oregon.gov (mailto:Charles.boyle@oregon.gov)

For General Public

Constituent Services
503-378-4582
https://www.oregon.gov/gov/pages/request-assistance.aspx
(https://www.oregon.gov/gov/pages/request-assistance.aspx)

Category

Emergency (Newsroom.aspx?category=Emergency)

Health (Newsroom.aspx?category=Health)

Safety (Newsroom.aspx?category=Safety)

Attachments

Help us improve! Was this page helpful? Yes No

At Your Service

State Government (/pages/government.aspx)

State Agency Directory (/pages/agencies.aspx)

State Employee Search (https://employeesearch.dasapp.oregon.gov)

Online Services (/pages/services.aspx)

Newcomers Guide (/pages/new-to-oregon.aspx)

Veterans Outreach (https://www.oregon.gov/odva/pages/vetform.aspx)

Governor (https://governor.oregon.gov)

State Legislature (https://www.oregonlegislature.gov)

Secretary of State (https://sos.oregon.gov)

State Treasurer (https://www.oregon.gov/treasury)

Attorney General (https://www.doj.state.or.us)

Labor Commissioner (https://www.oregon.gov/boli)

News & Alerts

News & Press Releases (https://www.oregon.gov/newsroom)

Road & Weather Conditions (https://tripcheck.com)

COVID-19 Response (https://coronavirus.oregon.gov)

Wildfire Recovery (https://wildfire.oregon.gov)

Amber Alerts (https://www.oregon.gov/osp/amberalert)

Flag Status (https://omls.oregon.gov/mailman/listinfo/flagnotifications)

About Oregon

Oregon.gov (https://www.oregon.gov)

State Employee Search (https://employeesearch.dasapp.oregon.gov)

Agencies Listing (https://www.oregon.gov/pages/a_to_z_listing.aspx)

Accessibility (https://www.oregon.gov/pages/accessibility.aspx)

Privacy Policy (https://www.oregon.gov/pages/terms-and-conditions.aspx)

Supported Browsers (https://www.oregon.gov/pages/supported-browsers.aspx)

Back to Top
An official website of the State of Oregon »
(http://www.oregon.gov)
Select Language
Powered by Google Translate (https://translate.google.com)