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Oregon News

[First new congressional map approved in Oregon after 2020 Census](#)

The Hill

House Minority Leader Christine Drazan (R) told The Hill in an interview last week, "Clearly they're determined to adopt a gerrymandered congressional map for the state of Oregon." "These maps clearly absolutely are incumbency protection maps that are intended to benefit the Democrat Party. There's no getting around it," she added. Drazan said Democrats have been "nothing but hypocrites on this issue." "They've spent the last couple of years calling on my party to just be better. And they're being complete hypocrites right now. Either gerrymandering is cheating or it's not, and Democrats across the nation say it's cheating. But what they should be saying is gerrymandering is cheating, unless we do it," she added.

[Oregon gov. seeks disaster relief for salmon industry](#)

KOIN

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown is requesting disaster relief from the federal government for the state's strained commercial salmon industry. Oregon Public Broadcasting reports the governor submitted the formal aid request this week to the U.S. Department of Commerce. Brown said in her letter the economic return from commercial salmon fishing along most of the coast since 2018 has been less than one-third of what it was in previous years. Brown said the trend is having severe effects on already distressed rural communities and businesses that depend on salmon.

[Are Oregon's vaccine mandates for health care employees working?](#)

KGW

Health care workers across Oregon and Washington must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or get an approved religious or medical exemption by Oct. 18 otherwise they could lose their jobs. Some hospital systems, like Legacy Health and Kaiser Permanente, have already placed employees on unpaid administrative leave for not meeting the requirement. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown announced the statewide mandate for health care workers on August 19. PeaceHealth and Kaiser Permanente were among several hospital systems that had already announced companywide vaccine requirements earlier in the month. So what impact have the mandates had on employee vaccination rates? We reached out to some of the largest hospital systems in Oregon and Washington to find out.

Legacy Health
Before the mandate: 85% of employees vaccinated
After the mandate: 95% of employees vaccinated

Kaiser Permanente
Before the mandate: 79% of employees vaccinated
After the mandate: 89% of employees vaccinated

After the mandate: 89% of employees vaccinated

Providence Health and Services

Before the mandate: 80% of employees vaccinated (as of the start of September)

After the mandate: 90% of employees vaccinated

Salem Health

Before the mandate: 75% of employees fully vaccinated

After the mandate: 83% of employees fully vaccinated and on pace for 88% by Oct. 18

OHSU

Before the mandate: 86% of staff and students fully vaccinated

After the mandate: 94% of staff and students fully vaccinated

[Early arguments against Oregon's vaccine mandate have slim chance of success, court says. Other lawsuits move forward](#)

The Oregonian \$\$\$

A group of 25 healthcare workers, firefighters and paramedics from across Oregon received a crushing blow this week when the Oregon Court of Appeals refused to intervene to stop a state mandate requiring them to get fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by Oct. 18.

The ruling, issued Tuesday, is the first in at least eight lawsuits seeking to overturn the authority of Gov. Kate Brown and the Oregon Health Authority to force certain categories of workers to get their jobs or else risk losing their jobs.

Tuesday's Court of Appeals ruling in the first case -- Oregon Medical Workers for Medical Freedom and Mandate Free Oregon vs. the Oregon Health Authority -- doesn't necessarily mean the fight for those plaintiffs is over. They still can continue and are likely to continue to pursue their cases, primarily in circuit courts, based on different arguments. But a key contention -- that the Oregon Health Authority didn't have the power to impose the vaccine mandate -- was cast aside by the Appeals Court as inaccurate.

The Appeals Court declined to order a temporary halt to the mandate, finding that if the plaintiffs' arguments were hashed out further they'd have "little-to-no likelihood of success."

Lt. Mark Duncan, who supervises 31 troopers as an area commander based in Malheur County, said his doctor told him he didn't need to get vaccinated because he already has natural immunity from his past infection and some studies show people in his situation have strong protection.

But Dr. Melissa Sutton, a senior health advisor for the Oregon Health Authority, told the judge that immunity can vary greatly by individual. She also pointed to an August CDC study that found people who'd previously been infected with SARS-CoV-2 but not vaccinated were twice as likely to be re-infected as people who were previously infected and then got fully vaccinated.

In their legal filings, attorneys for the state pointed to a landmark 1905 U.S. Supreme Court case -- Jacobson v. Massachusetts -- that upheld the authority of states to establish vaccine mandates, in that case, smallpox vaccinations.

"As the Supreme Court explained more than a century ago, 'a community has the right to protect itself against an epidemic of disease which threatens the safety of its members,'" wrote state attorneys in their legal filings for Wednesday's hearing.

Attorneys for the state also highlighted the state's power to require school children to undergo vaccinations or a past Oregon Supreme Court case from 1956 upholding the city of Bend's authority to add fluoride to its water supply for the greater public good.

[Jessica Berg Wilson died of extremely rare side effect of J&J COVID-19 vaccine; only 4th such death in US](#)

[Health in US](#)

The Oregonian

A 37-year-old Seattle woman who grew up in the Portland area and graduated from Oregon State University has become the fourth person believed to have died in the United States from a rare blood clotting complication linked to Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine, according to her family and Washington health officials.

The Washington State Department of Health and Public Health - Seattle & King County said Tuesday in separate statements that they believe the woman died of the complication described as "thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome," which is also known as "vaccine-induced immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT)."

Although neither state nor county officials identified the woman by name, her age "in her late 30s," date of death and county of residence match information in an obituary published by The Oregonian/OregonLive for Jessica Berg Wilson.

Local public health officials said the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention confirmed the woman's fatal diagnosis. The death is the first in Washington and the fourth in the nation that the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention has connected to the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, according to state officials.

The woman received the vaccine Aug. 27 and died 12 days later, on Sept. 7, according to local officials.

[Oregon lawmakers urge Gov. Kate Brown to extend eviction protections for renters](#)

Jefferson Public Radio

The leaders of the Oregon Legislature's joint housing committee are asking Gov. Kate Brown to issue an executive order to extend protections against evictions for renters who are struggling to make rent payments.

In a letter sent Wednesday, Rep. Julie Fahey, D-Eugene, and Sen. Kayse Jama, D-North Clackamas/SE Portland, notified Brown that the threat of eviction is imminent for more than 12,000 Oregon households that have applied for federal rental assistance but have not yet received it.

Fahey and Jama want Brown to extend the statewide 60-day pause on evictions to 120 days for those struggling to make rent payments due to economic conditions caused by the pandemic, or to extend the pause only in counties with large backlogs of unprocessed applications for assistance.

[15k healthcare job positions available in Oregon says state](#)

KOBI

WorkSource Oregon and the Oregon Employment Department are working to fill the urgent need for health care workers statewide. It hosted its "Hiring Heroes in Healthcare" virtual event Wednesday, to help get job seekers connected to employers.

50 health care employers and over 300 job seekers attended. The employment department says there are around 15,000 job vacancies in health care. Jobs available range from entry-level housekeeping, maintenance, and caregiving positions, to office admin, registered nurses, physicians and everything in between.

"We have a lot of openings, they can go to WorkSource Oregon web page or our LinkedIn page, they can follow us and see the jobs we have there, anything we can do to connect the job seeker to employment," said Adalberto Rubio with the Oregon Employment

Department.

[Oregon Nurses Association addresses staffing crisis](#)

KATU

Members of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) is set to speak on the staffing crisis Thursday morning.

October 4 marked the last day for most state workers, hospital employees, and teachers in Oregon and Washington to get vaccinated for COVID-19 or they risk potentially losing their job.

According to the ONA, some areas will feel the impacts of the mandate more than others. The Oregon Nurses Association said some 65% of healthcare workers in southern Oregon are not vaccinated.

"I think people would hear that number and say they would be frustrated to know that medical professionals are refusing to get something that could help and this pandemic," said Lynda Pond, President of the Oregon Nurses Association.

Staffing is so limited, ONA says they won't be able to help, hospitals will have to turn to travel nurses.

[State says fire season over for half of Oregon](#)

Blue Mountain Eagle

Half of Oregon is officially free of fire season, while the state's eastern and southern regions need significantly more rain before they're in the clear, experts say.

Record-breaking September rainfall, longer nights and more humid air have signaled the beginning of the end of a historic 2021 fire season. But fall rains have a decades-long drought to overcome in most of the West, meaning thicker fuels like timber aren't yet saturated by the season's precipitation.

"We got what seemed like a lot of rain, but it very quickly soaked into the soil and is running off," Larry O'Neill, an Oregon State professor studying how weather impacts wildfires, said Thursday. "So it was a very good start to a good wet season, but it really didn't do much to decrease the severity of the drought conditions."

[Oregon Farm Bureau gets new director of government affairs](#)

Blue Mountain Eagle

The Oregon Farm Bureau has hired attorney Lauren Smith to serve as director of government affairs, lobbying on behalf of the state's farmers and ranchers.

Smith comes to the Farm Bureau from the Oregon Association of Counties, where she was the legislative affairs manager for natural resources and veterans. She also spent five years as public policy counsel for the Oregon Water Resources Congress, representing irrigation districts statewide.

"After spending most of my career working in natural resources, I am so excited to join the Oregon Farm Bureau family," Smith said in a statement. "I consider it an honor to do what I can to protect what makes Oregon such an amazing place to live, specifically our diverse farming, ranching and forestry operations."

[Oregon Health Authority advises employers to be flexible in enforcing Oct. 18 vaccine mandate](#)

Salem Reporter

The Oregon Health Authority has advised the state and employers of health care staff, educators and others facing the Oct. 18 vaccine mandate not to fire employees over the deadline.

“Everybody doesn’t need to turn into a pumpkin on the 18th,” said Patrick Allen, director of the Oregon Health Authority. “But they can’t be in an in-patient- and student-facing work anymore at that point.”

The agency advised employers to let staff work remotely, take vacation time or unpaid leave to meet the deadline, he told the Oregon Health Policy Board on Tuesday. The board advises the state agency.

“There’s flexibility to not actually have to terminate people,” Allen said. “But people still really do need to get vaccinated.”

Gov. Kate Brown’s mandates require all executive branch employees, along with health care staff and educators and others who work or volunteer in schools to be fully vaccinated by the due date. Monday was the last day for those facing the mandate to get their second Pfizer or Moderna shot or their first Johnson & Johnson shot, Allen said. It takes two weeks for full inoculation to kick in.

[COVID cases continue to decline in Oregon](#)

AP News

Oregon’s weekly COVID-19 case count, hospitalizations and deaths continue to decline following the state’s worst coronavirus surge during the pandemic.

State health officials reported Wednesday that there were 462 new COVID-19 hospitalizations last week, a 10% reduction from the previous week and a continuation of a month of consecutive declines.

There were 114 reported COVID-19 related deaths, one less than the previous week.

In addition the Oregon Health Authority reported 10,400 new COVID-19 cases last week, a 9% decline from the previous week.

Although the number of coronavirus cases is improving in the state, the strain on Oregon’s hospital system continues — with just 53 available adult intensive care unit beds available. In addition, more than 90% of the states non-ICU beds are filled.

[Pandemic takes toll on Oregon on-track graduation rate](#)

KOIN

In the just-released “at a glance profile,” the Oregon Department of Education said students considered on-track to graduate fell 11% from the 2018-19 school year.

But ODE officials said they expect those numbers to rise again now that in-person learning has resumed across the state.

The report highlights critical data for schools in Oregon to track graduation and attendance rates across the entire state. A student is considered “in attendance” if they go to school more than 90% of the time.

On track to graduate means a 9th-grader has completed one-fourth the credits necessary for a diploma by the time the school year is over, including summer school.

Currently, the on-track to graduate rate in Oregon sits at 74%.

There are a range of percentages for districts’ projected graduation rate and attendance:

Portland Public Schools: 86%, 75.7%

West Linn-Willamette: 70.5%, 81.5%

West Linn Wilsonville: 79.5%, 81.5%

Lake Oswego: 95%+, 91.6%

Molalla River: 53.8%, 62.5%

Canby: 55.4%, 70.4%

Hood River County: 80.3%, 81.3%

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