

Joint Zip Code Statement



The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Oregon Department of Education (ODE) are appealing to Oregonians to stop using zip-code-level COVID-19 data in a way that furthers discrimination.

Both OHA and ODE are aware of community dynamics where pressure is being placed on Local Public Health Authorities (LPHAs), School Boards, or school leaders to use zip-code-level COVID-19 data to target or shame others, or to oversimplify how COVID-19 may be spreading in a community.

This is an inappropriate use of this data—it does not help the health of communities and perpetuates systemic racism that has plagued Oregon for far too long.

Schools and communities will find the most success and promote health by collaborating with each other, avoiding blame or targeting, and staying focused on the best ways to support each other across racial, cultural, geographic, or financial differences.

While there is a place for a zip code lookup by an LPHA to assess how or where 10 percent of students or staff from another county might impact whether or when a school could open fully On-Site or via Hybrid learning, that is the extent of its value. We need to work together and care for one another as we work to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Oregon.