



# JACKSON COUNTY

Oregon

## Administrator's Office

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June 1, 2020

Honorable Governor Kate Brown  
Office of the Governor  
c/o Jen Andrew  
900 Court Street NE Suite 254  
Salem OR 97301-4047

*Submitted via electronic mail to [jennifer.j.andrew@oregon.gov](mailto:jennifer.j.andrew@oregon.gov)*

RE: Jackson County Reopening Prerequisite Status and Plan

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of the Jackson County Board of Commissioners, please accept our submission of Jackson County's Request to Enter into Phase II of Reopening Oregon. Jackson County is currently meeting, or we are confident that we have strong mitigation strategies to meet, the seven prerequisites and criteria found in your May 28, 2020, correspondence titled Process for Entering Phase II, and we believe this status report demonstrates that. Jackson County is ready to safely reopen at a Phase II level.

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners respectfully requests that you grant an exception to Executive Order 20-12, or take whatever other action is necessary and allow Jackson County's businesses, non-profits, other governmental entities and, most importantly, its individual citizens and residents to enter into Phase II of Reopening Oregon.

These continue to be challenging times across our County, the State and the nation and your assistance is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Danny Jordan  
County Administrator

DJ:jv/jd

Attachments

cc: Board of Commissioners



## Jackson County Request to Enter into Phase II of Reopening Oregon Jackson County Board of Commissioners

June 1, 2020

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In Governor Brown's May 28, 2020 correspondence titled Process for Entering Phase II it outlined four general conditions, as well as seven prerequisites and criteria, which must be met before a county can receive approval to enter Phase II of Reopening Oregon. The four general conditions, and Jackson County's response to each, are as follows:

The date the county is requesting to enter Phase II – Jackson County is in a position to safely reopen at a Phase II level on **June 5, 2020** and the Jackson County Board of Commissioners respectfully requests Governor Brown issue an order, or take whatever action is necessary, to allow Jackson County to do so.

Re-attestation that county first responders have sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – The Jackson County Board of Commissioners confirms that PPE supplies for first responders are sufficient for current conditions and for potential surge levels.

The number of trained contact tracers currently available to the county – The following report discusses Jackson County's trained contract tracer capacity. The Board of Commissioners confirms that the county has 33 or more trained contract tracers.

Any substantive changes to responses submitted in the Phase I application regarding meeting Phase I prerequisites – The following report discusses Jackson County's current status of meeting the Phase I prerequisites. The County Board of Commissioners is convinced that we will continue to meet these standards. The narrative for Phase II reopening prerequisite #7, below, discusses our current experience with COVID-19 prevalence and offers an explanation and mitigation strategies to deal with a modest recent increase.

Jackson County is meeting the seven prerequisites and criteria outlined in Governor Brown's May 28, 2020 correspondence titled Process for Entering Phase II. The seven prerequisites and criteria are:

### Original Prerequisites

1. The percentage of emergency department visits for COVID-19-like illnesses (CLI) for the state as a whole must be less than the historic levels.
2. A county must show stable or declining hospital admissions for COVID-19.
3. A county must have an adequate Contact Tracing System.
4. County must continue to maintain adequate Isolation Facilities, Minimum Testing Regimen, Sufficient Health Care Capacity and Sufficient PPE Supplies.

### Additional Criteria to Enter Phase II

5. Timely Follow-Up: A minimum of 95% of all new cases must be contact traced within 24 hours over the previous 7 day and 14-day time periods.
6. Successful tracing: A minimum of 70% of new COVID-19 positive cases must be traced to an existing positive case over the previous 7 day and 14-day time periods.
7. No increase in incident cases or positivity:
  - a) There cannot be a five percent or greater increase in new cases in the county over the past 7 days; or
  - b) There cannot be a significant increase in the percentage of positive cases out of total tests taken in your county over the past 7 days.

## 1. Emergency Department Visits for COVID-19 like Illness Lower than Historic Flu levels

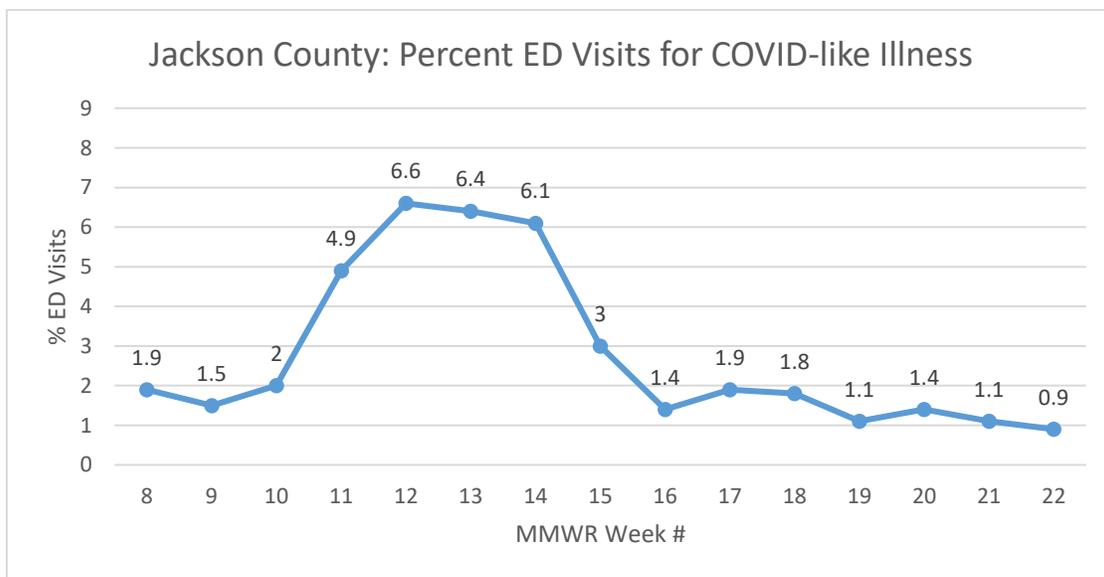
### Prerequisite:

*Over the previous 14-day period, the percentage of emergency department visits for COVID-19-like illnesses (CLI) for the state as a whole must be less than the historic average for flu at the same time of year.*

### Analysis:

This prerequisite is measured by the Oregon Health Authority at the statewide level and not at the county level. Nevertheless, Jackson County Public Health monitors Emergency Department (ED) visits through a syndromic surveillance system (ESSENCE) which looks at how many people are presenting to the ED for certain types of complaints/ illnesses. ED visits for COVID-19 like illness peaked in Jackson County during the week of March 15-22, declined steadily through the week of April 12-18, and have now held steady within the normal limits of what can be expected, in both the number and percent of visits, for 7 weeks. During the past 4 weeks, local ED visits for COVID-like illness have not been above 1.4% of all visits. Number of ED visits for COVID-like illness have been within normal limits for all age groups since mid-April.

The chart below shows that Jackson County has seen a downward trajectory in the percentage of emergency department visits for COVID-19-like illness with stabilization below 1.5% for the past 4 weeks.



Data source: ESSENCE, as of 6/1/20

## 2. Stable or Declining Hospital Admissions for COVID-19

### Prerequisite:

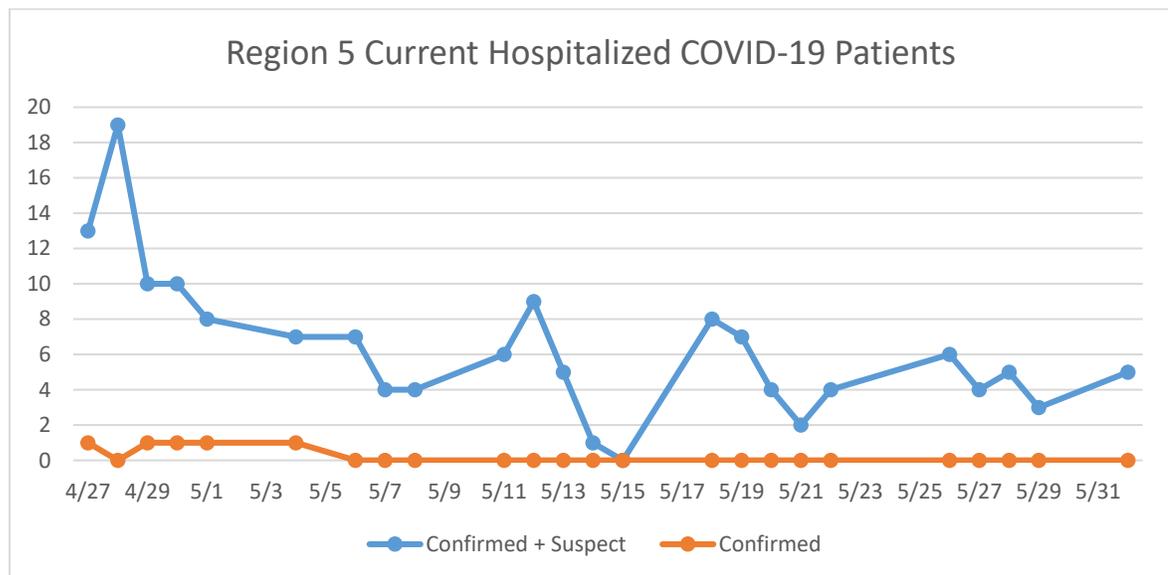
*Over the previous 14-day period, a county must show stable or declining hospital admissions for COVID-19. (This metric only applies to counties with more than 5 hospitalized cases in the last 28 days)*

### Analysis:

Jackson County has had no new COVID-19 case hospitalizations within the last 28 days.

The chart below shows suspected and confirmed hospitalized COVID-19 patients for Region 5 (Jackson and Josephine Counties) for the past 4.5 weeks. A clear declining trend in confirmed and suspect admissions is evident during the end of April.

Throughout May, the number of confirmed + suspect hospitalized COVID-19 patients has stayed below 10 and the number of confirmed hospitalized COVID-19 patients has never been greater than 1. This demonstrates a stably low burden on the regional healthcare system.



Data source: HOSCAP, mid-morning reported hospitalizations, as of 6/1/20

## 3. A County Must Have an Adequate Contact Tracing System, as Previously Defined

### Prerequisite (as previously defined):

- a. *County must have a minimum of 15 contact tracers for every 100,000 people.*
- b. *The contract tracing workforce must be reflective of the county and be able to conduct tracing activities in a culturally appropriate way and in multiple languages as appropriate for the population.*
- c. *County is prepared to contact trace 95% of all new cases within 24 hours.*

**Analysis:**

- a. Jackson County Public Health has been managing case investigation and contact tracing with existing staff since this event began in accordance with Oregon Health Authority requirements and guidelines. Staff have continued to perfect and streamline this process and, in the past 14 days, have contact traced all new cases within 24 hours.

At a standard of 15 contact tracers for every 100,000 people, Jackson County is required to have 33 contact tracers. Over the past several weeks, Jackson County Public Health has taken numerous steps to ensure that 33 or more contact tracers are available on an on-going basis. This is being accomplished with a three-part approach which includes expanding the number of trained and certified County Public Health employees, sub-contracting for contact tracers with Local Health Care Providers, and securing mutual aid agreements with neighboring counties.

As of the date of this submittal, Jackson County Public Health now has 33 trained contact tracers among the Health and Human Services Department employees and the county can meet this standard without additional assistance. Additionally, Jackson County Public Health has received a firm commitment and is currently finalizing agreements with Asante and with LaClinica, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), to sub-contract contact tracing with these providers. Lastly, Jackson County has entered into a mutual aid agreement with the public health authorities of Josephine, Klamath and Lane Counties to aid each other in response to this pandemic. Josephine County has noted that currently they have 17 trained contact tracing volunteers and only need 13 to meet the prerequisite requirement. These tracers can and will be utilized by Jackson County if needed.

In addition, Jackson County was selected by OHA as a potential candidate to beta test the ARIAS Contact Tracing System. Jackson County has submitted the requested information to participate in the beta test, which is scheduled to begin on June 8.

Between internal Public Health staff, sub-contracted employees and mutual aid agreements with neighboring counties, Jackson County exceeds the required 33 contact tracer requirement.

- b. According to the 2019 US Census Bureau ACS demographic and housing estimates for Jackson County, 13.2% of our population identifies as Hispanic or Latino and 8.9% of Jackson County households are classified as Limited English-Speaking with Spanish being their preferred language. This is far and away Jackson County's largest cohort of Limited English-Speaking households with all other Limited English-Speaking languages combined comprising less than 2.5% of our population.

Jackson County Public Health has direct line staff that are bilingual and/or bicultural for conducting case investigations and contact tracing in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner with our Latinx populations. Currently, ten (10) of the Jackson County Health & Human Services trained contact tracing staff are bilingual and/or bicultural. Additional Jackson County Health and Human Services bilingual/bicultural staff may be assigned to assist with the response if necessary. Once Jackson County has secured a subcontract for contact tracers with La Clinica, a local FQHC which focuses on

the Latinx population, this will add additional bilingual and bicultural capacity. Lastly, Jackson County's Deputy Health Officer is also a bilingual physician at La Clinica and is part of the team that is planning for COVID-19 response within the Latinx population within our community.

All of Jackson County HHS contact tracing staff have been trained in cultural and linguistic awareness and have an ongoing commitment to understand individuals and families within their cultural context and providing appropriate support. All telephonic, email, and home and personal visitations will recognize, acknowledge and respond with sensitivity to the unique culture of each family and individual.

- c. In the past 14 days, Public Health professionals have contact traced 100% of all reported cases within 24 hours. With an expanded staff, Jackson County expects to have no issues completing contact tracing for more than 95% of all new cases within 24 hours, even with a sizable surge event

Jackson County has demonstrated a contact tracing system has been established and will continue to meet the required prerequisite.

**4. Meet Previous Prerequisites of Isolation/Quarantine Facilities, Minimum Testing Regimen, Health Care Capacity and PPE supplies (prerequisite met)**

**Prerequisite:**

*A county must continue to maintain adequate isolation/quarantine facilities, a Minimum Testing Regimen, as previously defined, sufficient health care capacity to accommodate a 20% increase in suspected or confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations, and sufficient PPE supply as reported to OHA's Hospital Capacity system.*

**Analysis:**

Isolation/Quarantine Facility for Homeless: Jackson County continues to utilize two hotels, with signed agreements for their use, for the housing of suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases involving homeless individuals. These facilities and their associated support system, which have been utilized numerous times over the past month, include housing, feeding, medical oversight, and other needed support. The housing facilities are located in the downtown core of Medford where they are near medical support and other support services if needed. Food services have been, and will continue to be, provided by Jackson County for those individuals who cannot provide their own. Rooms are cleaned and sanitized by a contracted janitorial company per CDC recommendations in between uses for positive COVID-19 cases. Jackson County is providing payment for services at no cost to clients in an effort to encourage use of the program and eliminate a barrier due to lack of ability to pay.

Isolation/Quarantine Facility for Non-Homeless: Jackson County has a signed contract securing up to 50 rooms in a major downtown Medford hotel to serve as a Supported Self Care Recovery Site. This facility will serve the needs of county residents that have no means to safely isolate in their residence. Over the last month this facility has been used successfully nearly a dozen times. These rooms have outdoor entrances, individual

HVAC systems, and other criteria that are desirable for facilities of this intended use. Food services will be provided by Jackson County for those individuals who cannot provide their own. Rooms are cleaned and sanitized by a contracted janitorial company per CDC recommendations in between uses for positive COVID-19 cases. Jackson County provides payment for services at no cost to clients in an effort to encourage use of the program and eliminate a barrier due to lack of ability to pay. Generally, this facility has been and will be used to house those that have been tested and are awaiting results, or have been tested and deemed positive for COVID-19 and are either asymptomatic or have mild symptoms where the patient can provide their own care and not require medical attention above and beyond routine telehealth services. This facility is also available for healthcare workers performing services in an environment with high risk in respect to COVID-19 and first responders who may have been exposed to COVID-19 while performing emergency response duties.

Minimum Testing Regimen: In the Oregon Health Authority report titled Expansion of COVID-19 Testing in Oregon, April 25, 2020, it concludes that Region 5, including Jackson and Josephine Counties, are currently averaging a weekly testing rate of 30.4 tests per 10,000 people and that the ***“region likely has sufficient capacity to manage its own testing.”*** Since this publication, the region’s testing ability has only improved.

There are three primary healthcare agencies conducting COVID-19 tests in Jackson County – Asante, Providence, and LaClinica – and Jackson County Public Health keeps in regular contact with these agencies to assess current testing capacity. Currently, given a very reasonable assumption that Providence could handle 100 tests per day from southern Oregon and Asante has a consistent 8-day time table on receipt of new test kits from the supplier, capacity could be over 1,400 tests per week from the hospital labs alone. Adding access to external commercial labs through both Asante and La Clinica, access to the Oregon State Public Health lab through Jackson County Public Health, and testing for the veteran population through the VA in White City, it is not unreasonable to estimate that up to 2,000 tests per week could be possible. Jackson County already achieved one week where over 1300 tests were performed (March 23-29) and this was before local lab capacity at Asante and Providence had been fully established.

The prerequisite requirement for Reopening Oregon requires a testing capacity of at least 30 tests per 10,000 population per week. For Jackson County, this equates to a needed testing capacity of 660 tests per week, and for Region 5 (Jackson and Josephine Counties) this equate a needed testing capacity of 930 tests per week, both well below our current capacity estimate of 1,400 – 2,000 tests per week.

Sufficient health care capacity to accommodate a 20% increase in suspected or confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations: The hospitals in Region 5 report capacity data twice daily into the state’s HOSCAP data system. The Jackson County Public Health COVID-19 response team monitors this Region 5 HOSCAP data daily and from the peak of this event in late March to today, our system’s capacity has been, and continues, to be stable. According to HOSCAP data as monitored by the JCPH team, there were 13

confirmed or suspected COVID-19 hospitalizations in Jackson County on the morning of 4/27/20 and 19 on the morning of 4/28/20. Since 4/27/20, Region 5 has maintained a minimum of 12 available adult ICU beds and 50 available adult med/surg beds, more than enough to accommodate over a 100% increase in the number of suspect COVID-19 hospitalizations.

A major focus of the local Medical Advisory Group (MAG), consisting of the medical directors and officers of our region's healthcare organizations, has been the development of a solid regional surge capacity plan. The MAG and Jackson County Public Health continue to refine plans to deal with a major breakout of cases

Officials from both Providence Medford Medical Center and Asante continue to state that they are able to meet a 20% increase in suspected or confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations.

Sufficient PPE Supplies: This prerequisite will be certified by OHA, but the hospitals continue report to the county that this standard is met and that they have more than a 30-day supply of PPE.

Local, state and national PPE supplies have been an issue since this pandemic began and supplies in Jackson County were no different with PPE reaching critically low levels in mid-March. However, that condition has changed, burn rates have substantially decreased, and supply chains have improved dramatically.

Jackson County's central PPE inventory is monitored and distributed by the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) who has been providing PPE to first responders, health care providers, SNF's, Long-term care facilities, primary care facilities and clinics, and many others. Following the county's entry into Phase I, the first responders collectively requested a large "surge inventory" be provided to each response agency which was completed on May 11. The first responders note that they have sufficient PPE currently on hand to deal with existing caseloads as well as a potential large surge. Current stockpiles in the EOC are strong and include over 8,800 N95 masks, 7,200 KN-95 masks, 68,000 surgical / procedure masks, 15,000 face shields and 35,000 gloves. The county is well positioned to deal with an expanded PPE surge if that need occurs.

## **5. Contact Tracing within 24 Hours**

### **Prerequisite:**

*Timely Follow-Up: A minimum of 95% of all new cases must be contact traced within 24 hours as reported in the state's ORPHEUS system over the previous 7 day and 14 day time periods.*

### **Analysis:**

Within the past 14 days, and since the start of the contact tracing for COVID-19, Jackson County Public Health officials have contact traced 100% of all reported cases within 24 hours. With an expanded staff, Jackson County anticipates continuing to complete contact tracing for more than 95% of all new cases within 24 hours, even with a sizable surge event.

## **6. Contact Tracing - 70% Traced to an Existing Positive Case**

### **Prerequisite:**

*Successful tracing: A minimum of 70% of new COVID-19 positive cases must be traced to an existing positive case over the previous 7 day and 14 day time periods.*

### **Analysis:**

Jackson County had a total of 7 new cases in the past 7 days (May 25 – 31), 6 (85.7%) of which have been traced to an existing positive case. Of the 16 new cases in the past 14 days (May 18 – 31), 12 (75%) have been traced to an existing positive case, leaving only 4 cases classified as sporadic without a known exposure source.

## **7. No Increase in Incident Cases or Positivity**

### **Prerequisite:**

*No increase in incident cases or positivity:\**

*a) There cannot be a five percent or greater increase in new cases in the county over the past 7 days; or*

*b) There cannot be a significant increase in the percentage of positive cases out of total tests taken in your county over the past 7 days.*

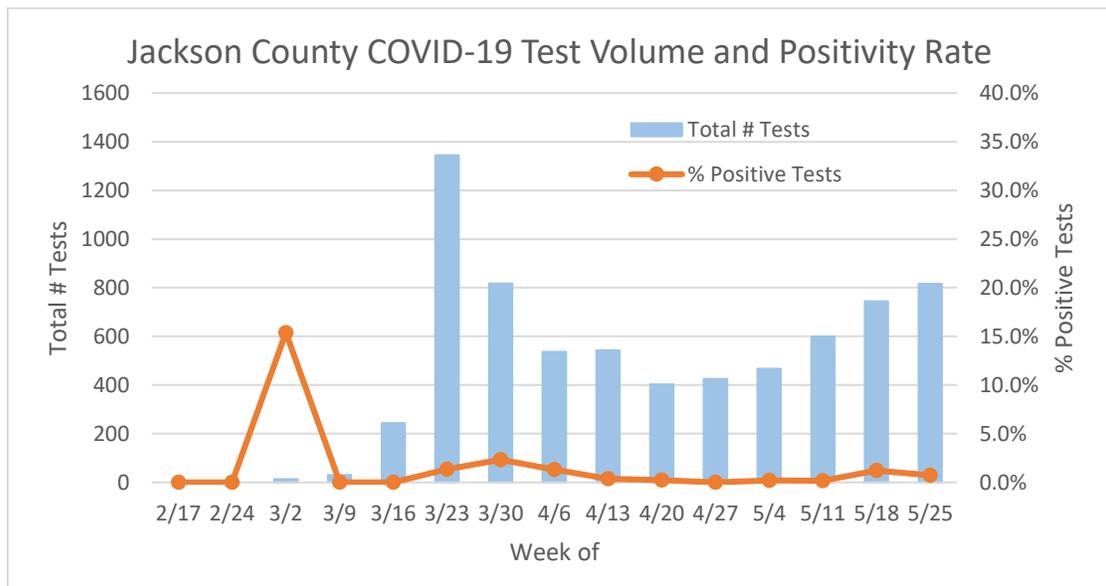
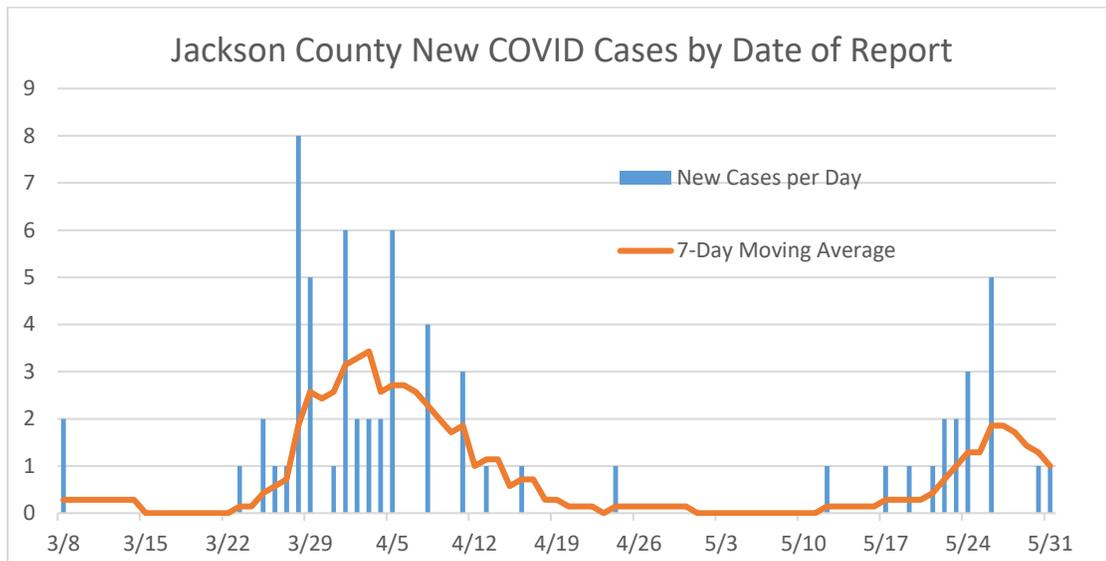
*\*If a controlled outbreak in a group living or working facility is solely responsible for violating this criteria and where extensive follow-up testing and isolation has been successfully carried out, this criteria may be waived by the Governor with support from the Oregon Health Authority.*

### **Analysis:**

In the past 7 days (May 25-31), Jackson County had a total of 7 new cases which represents a decrease of 22% compared to the previous 7 days (May 18-24) in which there were 9 new cases. Six of the seven new cases in the past 7 days were identified through timely case investigation and contact tracing by Jackson County Public Health staff who rapidly identified, tested, and isolated symptomatic contacts of existing cases, thereby identifying cases who may otherwise have gone undetected and acting to stop further spread. Test positivity in the past 7 days has declined from 1.2% to 0.7%.

Jackson County was fortunate enough to experience no new cases between April 25 and May 11. Though Jackson County has now started to experience new cases again starting in mid-May, our rolling 7-day new daily case average has not ever exceeded 2 during this time and our weekly total for new cases has not exceeded 10. Cumulative test positivity in Jackson County remains below 1% and weekly test positivity has not exceeded 1.5% since early-mid April (see graph below). We consider our level of cases in the past two weeks to be a reasonable number of cases to be expected as a new normal under the conditions of reopening and within the capacity of both our public health and healthcare systems to handle (see narrative for prerequisites 2-5). As evidenced in the

narrative responses to prerequisites 1 and 2, COVID-like illness in the emergency departments and suspect COVID-19 patients admitted to the hospitals have remained stably low which supports the conclusion that overall prevalence of COVID-19 within the Jackson County community also remains low.



Data source: Orpheus, as of 6/1/20

Jackson County remains committed to preventing and, if necessary, mitigating any future increases in incident cases. We have built strong community public health capacity for contact tracing and safe isolation/quarantine for those who need it (see narratives for prerequisites 3 and 4). We have engaged community partners in planning for rapid response to cases in long-term care and skilled nursing facilities, our jail, and

among migrant agricultural workers. We have active social and traditional media campaigns, including in Spanish, to promote non-pharmaceutical interventions and guidance on what to do if someone has COVID-19-like symptoms. Our daily press releases and media interviews promotes these messages.

### **Conclusion and Request**

Jackson County is currently meeting, or has strong mitigation strategies to meet, the seven prerequisites / criteria found in Governor Brown's May 28, 2020 correspondence titled Process for Entering Phase II and we believe this status report has demonstrated that. Jackson County is ready to safely reopen at a Phase II level. Therefore, the Jackson County Board of Commissioners respectfully request Governor Brown grant an exception to Executive Order 20-25 or take whatever other action is necessary and allow Jackson County's, businesses, non-profits, other governmental entities, and most importantly, its individual citizens and residents to enter into Phase II of Reopening Oregon.