



Board of Commissioners

Courthouse, Room 110
225 W. Olive Street
Newport, Oregon 97365
(541) 265-4100
FAX (541) 265-4176

August 6, 2020

The Honorable Kate Brown, Governor
900 Court St. NE, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047

sent via e-mail to: Jen Andrew
Office of the Governor
Jennifer.j.andrew@oregon.gov

Dear Governor Brown:

Lincoln County requests to enter phase 2 of the Plan for Reopening Oregon on August 24, 2020.

The County entered phase 1 on May 15, 2020. We did not request entrance into phase 2 when most other Oregon Counties applied because a major workplace outbreak occurred the day before we were to apply. We thereafter experienced an increase in cases concerning enough to be placed on your watch list on July 3, 2020 along with several other counties in the state. We were removed from the watch list on July 30, 2020. Lincoln County is cautiously moving forward towards reopening. We are submitting our application now but requesting a later effective date. This is predicated on continued improvement in our joint efforts to control the spread of the disease and see a downward trend of cases in the County.

Lincoln County currently meets or exceeds all the four original Oregon Health Authority (OHA) metrics for moving into phase 2:

- Percentage of Emergency Department visits for COVID-19 like illnesses for the state as a whole must be less than the historic average flu at the same time of year.
OHA Tracked **MET**
- Stable or declining hospital admissions for COVID-19.
OHA Tracked (Not applicable if less than 5 admissions in last 28 days) **MET**
- Adequate Contract Tracing System.
Lincoln County currently has 18 case investigators and 12 contract tracers¹ **MET**
- Continue to maintain adequate isolation/quarantine facilities, a minimum testing regimen, sufficient health care capacity to accommodate a 20% increase in suspected

¹ See additional information in transmittal about contract tracing resources.

or confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations, and sufficient PPE supply as reported to OHA's Hospital Capacity system.

Lincoln County continues to maintain arrangements to provide isolation and quarantine facilities and locations as needed as well as housing for vulnerable and at-risk homeless populations during the crisis. Testing resources have been increased since phase 1. As tracked by OHA our Region 2 has a capacity of 35 people per 10,000 per week, which exceeds the metric of 1 people per 10,000.² Our Samaritan Health Services partners (for both Pacific Communities Hospital in Newport, North Lincoln Hospital in Lincoln City, and the entire Samaritan Health System serving Linn, Benton and Lincoln Counties) have reconfirmed our capacity to accommodate a 20% increase in hospitalizations and have sufficient PPE as reported to HOSCAP (OHA's Hospital Capacity System). MET

Lincoln County has undertaken an expansive public health campaign with our community partners entitled "Keep Lincoln County Open", which has served as a model for several other Oregon Counties (and beyond our borders), as a companion education effort to state information sharing. We also have increased our information outreach to serve our diverse local populations.

In addition:

- While we saw an increase in cases significant enough to place us on the watch list, we are off that list now and continue trending downward in cases. A very recent outbreak in a long-term care facility will be monitored very carefully. Otherwise, there are not any substantive changes since Lincoln County's phase 1 application was submitted.
- Lincoln County again attests that to our knowledge and based on reports from our first responder partners we have sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as noted in our phase 1 application. If anything, supply lines have improved since that initial application.
- Lincoln County, with assistance from OHA and Oregon Emergency Management, neighboring counties, the Siletz Tribe, the Lincoln County School District, Lincoln County Extension Service, and the Samaritan Health System ramped up needed contact tracing resources to insure we can reach diverse and displaced county populations in a timely manner. With the recent outbreaks, the County will continue to carefully monitor our contact tracing resources and staff and will work with OHA and others to increase back up resources for simultaneous events or larger outbreaks - - both locally and across the state. We have 18 case investigators and 14 contract tracers as of July 23, 2020
- Lincoln County received FEMA pre-approval for COVID-19 funding to provide non congregant housing and has contracts and arrangements for isolation/quarantine lodging to respond to COVID-19 health needs and can include some housing for vulnerable homeless populations. We continue to meet requirements to provide for isolation/quarantine lodging.

² These are the latest online figures updated May 15, 2020 for the Region. It is our understanding the capacity has increased since that time.

- Lincoln County continues to monitor all six of OHA's Public Health Indicators for COVID-19 response in Oregon Counties. As of the date of this application, we do not meet two criteria³: (1) Percent increase in new cases in last 7 days (desired metric is no more than 5% increase; Lincoln County is at 22%); (2) Percent of cases not traced to a known source in the last 7 days (desired metric is less than 30%; Lincoln County is at 45%). Both indicators are of concern to the County. The first reflects in part the up and down nature of cases reported during the time since the County was placed on the watch list. Each seven-day period is a point in time examination, and that trend can go up and down easily because we are seeing overall reductions in cases so that each new case is a greater percentage change. When coupled with the no trend in positivity, this appears to show an overall trend downward. But we also recognize that it reflects the volatility of the spread of the disease and how it can change very rapidly. The second metric is of greater concern since it shows significant spread through unknown community acquisition, meaning the source is in the community at large and not associated with a workplace or event. That makes contact tracing and therefore containment of the spread more difficult. Lincoln County continues to educate and inform the public that no matter what phase of reopening we are in, fundamental practices of face covering, socially distancing, and hand washing and sanitation must still be followed if we are to reverse those trends.

We are making this application now to begin the process of moving forward with OHA's review of the reopening criteria for phase 2 and assistance in addressing the spread. We chose a later opening date to continue monitoring the trends to make sure we are heading in the right direction. Because of the nature of the disease and its ability to increase or decrease dramatically in a short period of time, we reserve the right to revoke the application or modify or extend the requested date for entering phase 2

We remain committed to a strategy that strikes the right balance between health concerns and restoration of our economy based on data and information from health officials and that provides stability and some certainty in guidance as we continue to address this pressing issue. We will continue to work with local, state and national partners in responding responsibly and thoughtfully while recognizing the impacts on our communities and citizens. We intend to recover and rebuild, better and stronger than before.

Thank you and your team again for your leadership in this crisis.

Sincerely



Kaety Jacobson
Commissioner, Chair



Rebecca Austen
Public Health Administrator

³ Data as of July 29, 2020.