



# DOUGLAS COUNTY COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAM

JOINT INFORMATION CENTER PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – July 7, 2020

## DOUGLAS COUNTY COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAM

\*\*\* SPECIAL REPORT \*\*\*

### THE THREAT OF CORONAVIRUS SPREADING IN OUR COUNTY IS STILL HERE

**(Douglas County, Ore.)** Many of our residents have been asking why we have seen a steady increase in our positive confirmed cases in the last few weeks. The answer is **TRAVEL**! Yes, the majority of our recent cases have been directly linked to travel outside Douglas County, and especially those residents that have chosen to travel outside of Oregon.

It's no surprise that with the onset of summer, schools releasing students and staff for summer vacation, and the recent approval for our county to enter Phase TWO of the Governor's Phased Reopening plan, that we are seeing a surge in the number of people that are traveling in and out of our county for vacations, getaways, camping trips, family reunions, weddings and more. Whatever your reason for traveling, we encourage you to please do so in a COVID-19 safe manner. We have shared a number of articles and infographics about continued COVID-19 safety and travel in recent weeks, but we felt it necessary to provide a press release to address the issue of travel directly.

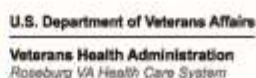
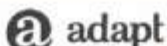
*"We have enjoyed a very low attack rate in Douglas County thus far, but every time someone decides to travel or make a stopover in a highly infected COVID-19 area, they run a very high risk of contracting the virus and then bringing it back to Douglas County,"* stated Dr. Bob Dannenhoffer, our Douglas County Public Health Officer.

As we have stressed before, the COVID-19 virus is still here, still infectious and will be around for quite some time. Current data from CDC and OHA shows that traveling and coming into contact with people from other areas does significantly increase your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19. So, before you travel, attend a party or invite your relatives from out of state to visit, you need to assess the risk to you, your family and to your local community. The bottom line is that each and every person needs to take personal responsibility for their actions and adopt the proper precautionary measures for COVID-19 protection.

*"We know it has been difficult, and we know you are anxious to get back to living your life, but we ask that you please continue to be vigilant in helping us to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our county,"* commented Chris Boice, Chair of the Douglas County Board of Commissioners.

#### **A FEW THINGS TO CONSIDER IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO TRAVEL DURING COVID-19:**

- 1) **Why are you traveling?** Are you traveling to visit a sick relative or attend a wedding? You need to weigh the risk of travel with the risk of getting sick.
- 2) **Are you sick?** The same advice applies to going to work, to the store and to travel, if you are sick, stay home.
- 3) **When will you be traveling?** If you plan to travel in the next few weeks or in the next few months, make sure you know what the status is for the area you intend to visit. Make sure to track the COVID-19 case data for the area you are traveling to and if there is a significant spike in cases, you need to consider whether you are willing to take the chance of being exposed. Also, check on local restrictions and guidelines. Make sure you know the guidelines for dining, shopping and travel before you go.
- 4) **Where will you be traveling to?** Are you traveling to the next city, county or to another state? The farther you travel from home the more risk you have for being exposed to the virus. Again, make sure to track the COVID-19 case data for the area you are traveling to and if there is a significant spike in cases, you need to consider whether you are willing to take the chance of being exposed.
- 5) **How are you getting there?** Currently, the CDC is reporting that the highest rate of transmission is from proximity contact on mass transit systems. They are not sure if one type of travel is safer than others; however, airplanes and airports, buses and bus stations, trains and train stations, cabs and rest stops are all places travelers can be exposed to the virus. These are locations where it can be hard to social distance (keep 6 feet apart from other people) and where surfaces like doors, rails, faucets, tables, seats and handles are touched on a more frequent basis. Check to see what



COVID-19 safety precautions the mode of travel you are taking has implemented, and make sure they are disinfecting on a regular schedule, promoting and enforcing minimal contact and have put distance measures in place.

- 6) **Who is traveling?** People that are at a higher risk for severe illness, like our elderly population and those with compromised immune systems need to take extra precautions or consider staying home. Traveling to visit family may be especially dangerous if you or your loved ones are more likely to get very ill from COVID-19.
- 7) **What should I take with me to protect myself?** It is always a good idea to be prepared for any situation you encounter when traveling, and with COVID-19 it is even more important to protect you and your families' health. This means making sure you pack your own hand sanitizer, soap, disinfectant wipes, tissues, toilet paper and face coverings. Remember, a place is only as clean as the last person that used it. Make sure to go over guidelines with those traveling with you, especially children. Let them know that they need to keep their distance, limit what they touch and wash their hands often.
- 8) **What should I do when I return?** We always recommend that you consult and follow your doctor's advice prior to travel, as well as upon your return home. Additionally, some businesses and employers have implemented strict pandemic or COVID-19 policies regarding employees that travel outside the area. Make sure to check with your supervisor about what those guidelines might be before you travel. Some physicians or employers are recommending that people self-quarantine for two weeks (14 days) upon return from a highly infected area. If you feel like you are getting sick, or if you get sick, or if you had direct contact with someone that has COVID-19, contact your doctor or a local clinic and inquire about being tested.

For additional information and tips about traveling safely during COVID-19 visit the [Center for Disease Control's COVID-19 travel webpage](#).

**PLEASE CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19:**

- 1) **Please Stay Home if you are sick or feeling ill**
- 2) **Keep your distance (six-feet please) from others not in your household**
- 3) **Cover your cough and sneezes**
- 4) **Minimize interactions with others not in your household**
- 5) **Wash your hands frequently**
- 6) **Clean frequently used surfaces with disinfectant**
- 7) **Limit travel, especially out of state**
- 8) **Try to keep your trips local and select venues that have ample social distance**
- 9) **Get tested if you are having symptoms of the COVID-19 virus, including cough, fever, shortness of breath, muscle aches and pains, diarrhea, sore throat or decreased sense of smell and taste.**

We will continue to provide the latest case updates, as well as health, safety and information tips to our residents as long as the COVID-19 virus continues to pose a threat to the health and wellbeing of our residents.

**Stay Informed with the Accurate Information**

Your Douglas County Board of Commissioners, Douglas County Public Health Officer, Dr. Robert Dannenhoffer and the Douglas County COVID-19 Response Team have been working hard to cooperatively provide accurate and timely information to Douglas County residents since March 8, 2020.

**Local COVID-19 Hotline: If you have questions about resources available, call the COVID-19 hotline, staffed by local volunteers at (541) 464-6550 from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, 7 days a week.**

Stay up to date on COVID-19 in Douglas County on the [Douglas County Government website](#) or the [DPHN website](#). Find additional information on state or federal COVID-19 response from the following websites: [Oregon Health Authority](#), [Centers for Disease Control](#), and by calling or logging onto [211Info](#).

**Got Questions about the Governor's Phased Reopening Plans?** If you have questions or need more information about the Governor's Phased Reopening Plans or Sector Specific Guidelines go to <https://govstatus.egov.com/reopening-oregon>. Or directly contact the [Governor's Office](#) or [Oregon Health Authority](#)

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