



Governor Kate Brown Announces New Statewide Actions on COVID-19

March 16, 2020

Salem, OR - Governor Kate Brown today announced new measures to flatten the curve of coronavirus transmission in Oregon, including new orders and guidance on social distancing, an agreement for the Portland metro hospital system to coordinate resources and increase capacity, activation of the state's Unified Command emergency response organizational structure, and a new order to prevent price gouging.

"My goal is to protect the health and safety of Oregon families. Every step we are taking is being made with community input and careful consideration of its impacts," said Governor Brown. "Each action has ripple effects across our state, both on a personal and an economic level. But we can overcome these hurdles in an Oregon Way. By working together, we are stronger, even if it's in ways we never thought possible."

The new orders on social distancing measures, effective March 17 for at least four weeks, include:

- A statewide cancelation of all events and gatherings larger than 25 people — exempting essential locations like workplaces, grocery stores, pharmacies, and retail stores. It's additionally recommended that Oregonians avoid gatherings of 10 people or more.
- Restaurants, bars, and other establishments that offer food or beverages for sale are restricted to carry-out and delivery only with no on-site consumption permitted.
- Food service at health care facilities, workplaces, and other essential facilities will continue.
- All other businesses are urged to assess their practices, implement strong social distancing measures, and close their doors temporarily if they cannot put the new guidance in place.

"I know that while these actions will impact Oregon businesses and employees, they will help decrease the rate of infection while bringing state and federal resources up to the same speed as the spread of the virus," said Governor Brown.

The Governor's Coronavirus Economic Advisory Council will convene tomorrow to examine ways to mitigate the impacts of new social distancing measures and anything else that adversely affects Oregon's economy. The council will examine a variety of tools available, including requests to the State Legislature and the federal government.

Governor Brown also announced the formation of two command groups, one to manage our health care system's resources and the other to manage our state resources. The metro regional COVID-19 hospital response plan will help the health care community to prepare for the expected surge of COVID-19 cases in the coming weeks — a model for a crisis care plan that can be implemented statewide. Working together, hospitals will treat COVID-19 testing resources and personal protective equipment, including gowns, masks, and gloves, as community resources, and work together to increase bed capacity.

The state's Unified Command emergency response organizational structure, an incident management structure similar to what Oregon would activate during a major Cascadia earthquake, has also been activated. This will fully integrate the Oregon Health Authority's public health response efforts with the Office of Emergency Management's efforts to minimize any disruption to critical services in Oregon.

At the request of the Attorney General , Governor Brown declared an abnormal market disruption regarding essential items like hand sanitizer and toilet paper, to prevent price gouging during this public health crisis.

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