

Update: March 9, 2020

To the Linfield Community,

This weekend the Oregon Health Authority reported seven new cases of COVID-19 coronavirus, bringing the total of known cases in the state to 14. Four of the five new cases in Washington County were contacts of that county's first three known cases. The two cases in Jackson County and Klamath County appear to be travel related and not due to contact with another resident of that area. One of the new cases in Washington County and the new cases in Douglas and Marion Counties do not appear to be travel related or due to an exposure from a known case, therefore these cases are being investigated as community acquired. There are no known cases in Yamhill County.

Oregon Governor Kate Brown issued an emergency declaration allowing for greater resources to be focused on containing the spread of COVID-19. These efforts will focus specifically on populations who are most at risk for experiencing a severe illness, including the elderly, those with underlying medical conditions and the homeless population.

The Oregon Health Authority issued guidelines for educational institutions K-12 and colleges and universities. These guidelines are in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions recommendations. Linfield College plans to follow the Oregon Health Authority and currently, the College remains open with classroom education ongoing.

Linfield College has a team of administrators, staff and faculty from both the Portland and McMinnville campuses who have been working together since the outbreak in China became known. This team has been creating signage and messaging on ways to prevent the spread of infections, as well as increasing the numbers of hand sanitizer stations and disinfectant spray and paper towels available to use in classrooms, meeting rooms, residence halls and the dining hall. The cleaning crew has increased the frequency of disinfecting high touch areas such as doorknobs and handles, hand railing, elevator buttons and hard surfaces. Residence Life staff are reviewing infection control materials with students, stocking "flu kits" and checking in with students who are ill. While the college plans to continue classroom teaching at this point, faculty have been instructed to design ways to deliver education in other manners if necessary. We are in frequent contact with Yamhill Public Health officials, as well as the Oregon Health Authority. We are connected with our colleagues at other colleges and universities and are sharing with and learning from them as we all navigate this situation.

The population most vulnerable to severe illness from this virus are the elderly, those with underlying medical conditions and anyone with a compromised immune system. We encourage all to check in with any loved one who might fall into any of these categories.

We encourage our community to avoid contact with anyone in these categories if you are ill.

A final reminder to do follow the Center for Disease Control and Preventions recommendations to control the spread of infection:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.
  - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
  - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for [health workers](#) and [people who are taking care of someone in close settings](#) (at home or in a health care facility).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

[Learn more about Oregon's effort to respond to COVID-19.](#)