

Commissioners respond to plan to lift COVID-19 restrictions by June 30

SALEM — Responding to Gov. Kate Browns decision to rescind COVID-19 restrictions by June 30 or when the state achieves a 70% vaccination rate — whichever comes first — Commissioner Roger Nyquist encourages Linn County residents to “go out and enjoy life with all your zest and enthusiasm in the days, weeks and years to come.”

Brown made the announcement Friday morning.

“The grit and determine that I have witnessed from Linn County citizens to get through the last 16 months is beyond description,” Nyquist said. “As someone who has spent my entire life here, it does not surprise me. While COVID-19 may be around for a while in some form, I believe the mandates and restrictions are done.”

Nyquist added, “For a while at least, I think most of us will be grateful for some of the little things that in the past we have taken for granted. We need to give extra attention to our youth and make sure they are getting the same opportunities we did growing up as they paid a heavy price during the pandemic.”

Brown said she is proud the 2.3 million Oregonians who were vaccinated, about 69% of all adults.

“We should all take pride in the work we have done to bring us to this moment,” Brown said. “The efforts underway to close our vaccine equity gap and reach every Oregonian with information and a vaccine have definitely helped bring us this far. Thank you to all who are going the extra mile to vaccinate Oregonians.”

Some statewide mask requirements may stay in place in specialized settings following federal guidance, including airports, public transit, and health care settings.

Rescinding the Governor’s executive orders for K-12 schools, higher education, and childcare will mean a shift to a more traditional, local decision-making model for communities when it comes to serving the health and safety needs of students and children.

In order to ensure a return to full-time, in-person instruction in

the fall, the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority will be issuing updated, advisory guidance for the 2021-22 school year. Schools will be expected to comply with longstanding regulations around the control of infectious diseases, and to have a communicable disease management plan.

Linn County distributed more than 1.5 million units of Personal Protective Equipment during the pandemic, according to Health Director Todd Noble.

Noble said the county also provided COVID-19 tests free to 25,000 people and administered 98,000 vaccinations at 42 mass vaccination clinics and 57 mobile clinics.

The county’s mobile clinic continues to provide free vaccinations to individuals in every corner of the county on a daily basis, Noble said.

Noble added that Linn County’s vaccination clinics were unique because “they were the only mass vaccination clinics run in the state that were not hospital-based.”

They were operated by the county along with volunteers from the Medical Reserve Corps. Linn County also teamed up with Samaritan Health Services.

Nearly 1,000 volunteers provided about 22,500 hours of community service valued at more than \$1.1 million, Noble said.

At their peak, the clinics could provide up to eight shots per hour, with wait times of just six minutes.

The most shots given in a single day was 3,625 on May 6.

Linn County also approved the distribution of millions of dollars in emergency financial aid to area restaurants and other businesses, which had to cope with the state-mandated shut-downs.

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