



LOC Coronavirus Conf Call for City Leaders

May 29, 2020

Q & A

Leah Horner, Regional Solutions Director

Sandy Toms, Boardman: Hi, this is Sandy from the city of Boardman. The question I have as far as Phase Two is concerned, will senior centers be in that Phase Two? I haven't heard anything mentioned about senior centers because at our senior centers, we feed lunches twice a week and we have breakfast once a month.

Leah Horner, Regional Solutions Director, State of Oregon: That's a great question. That is something that was on our list. But I don't think that we have landed that yet. But I will flag that again for our conversation this afternoon. So thank you for bringing that up.

Meadow Martell, Cave Junction: Good morning. What has been the thinking about Children's Playgrounds in city parks?

Leah Horner, Regional Solutions Director, State of Oregon: That's a great question, Mayor. We are going to continue to keep playgrounds closed because of the potential for transmission and the inability to keep those facilities cleaned pretty frequently. City parks, however, I believe, can open as they see fit. But we are asking that playgrounds stay closed.

Gary, Junction City: You indicated that the gatherings could go up, but you didn't give any kind of number. Do you have a number on that? And then the other question that I'm getting a lot of is churches, are churches included in phase two?

Leah Horner, Regional Solutions Director, State of Oregon: Yes. Thank you for that question. And so, I'm hesitant to throw out numbers. But if I were guessing what we're looking at, probably I would say 50, maybe for indoors as a max limit on gathering and a 100, maybe four outdoors. But that is still subject to change. So, I caveat that. The other thing that we're looking to do is, as I indicated, we're putting together venue guidance, which would be subject to the same kind of occupation capacity the restaurants are. So basically, if you have space, you can figure out how many people you can keep in there with your social distance of six feet. And so, we're looking at putting churches under that same guideline in phase two.

Sara Beaudrault, Oregon Health Authority

Mike Cully: Contact tracing - Is that a big focus right now still? I know that many counties are working on this. But what does it look like from your perspective?

Sara Beaudrault, Oregon Health Authority: Yes. So, from our perspective, contact tracing is a piece of a larger system. So when someone is tested and they have positive results, then the work that happens immediately is that local public health gets in touch with that case and begins giving them the information they need immediately, finding out where they have been, finding out who they have been with over the past few days when they have been potentially transmitting the disease and making sure that person knows exactly what's expected in terms of isolating themselves from others during the period that they may be spreading the disease. And at the same time, then the contact tracing comes into play when we begin connecting with every person that has touched that case and potentially been exposed. So those people are asked to quarantine and monitor symptoms and work with the local public health authorities daily to report any new symptoms. So, we're monitoring them during that period where they may be not symptomatic yet but may still develop the disease.

Mike Cully: This question comes from Dan Kohler from the city of Keizer. He wants to know if we have any information as to how many have fully recovered from COVID 19. Active cases are different from those who have tested positive.

Sara Beaudrault, Oregon Health Authority: Yep. So, we have had about 4000 cases in Oregon and about 1900 are documented as recovered. So, this is often as a phone call between local public health authorities and individuals to see whether their symptoms have resolved. And then that gets documented in our statewide communicable disease system. So, we're able to track it that way.

Tom Brownson, Astoria: Can you update us a little bit on how the 100,000 monitoring and 10000 random tests are going? And then just a quick comment on tracing, testing and tracing. I listened to a podcast this week in virology and they came up with a great acronym for that Tetris for testing, tracing, and isolate.

Sara Beaudrault, Oregon Health Authority: That's good. I like that. We should adopt that. So, having that having the contact tracers that are available in each county ready to step in and respond to cases. So that is one of the indicators that we look at and then have posted on our dashboard and in the phase one reopening plans that counties submitted, they needed to sort of show where they're at with having those contractors contact tracers lined up right now, and they also needed to demonstrate that they had a plan to increase it. So, our website does show by county which counties already have those people lined up and in place. I think it was 15 per 10... I honestly can't remember right now. So, I'm not going to give you any numbers. So, a lot of counties have all of those bodies in place and those that don't have a plan to bring those people on. So, you know, if the county is not having a bunch of cases right now, it's OK that they don't have those people already on staff and ready to go because they have a plan to work with partners to bring them on and turn them on as soon as they need them. In terms of the 10000 random tests, I think you might be asking about the study being conducted by OHSU and PSU. I actually can't provide an update on that. I'd be happy to bring that back next week or provide information offline. In terms of our overall testing capacity statewide we've estimated that we need to be doing 15000 tests per week and we've been above that for quite a few weeks in a row now.

Mike Cully: Are there any repercussions or fallout if folks that are being traced choose not to participate?

Sara Beaudrault, Oregon Health Authority: Repercussions or fallout for the local public health authority?

Mike Cully: Well, just from I think from individuals are being traced if they're not, they're not choosing to participate in that program.

Sara Beaudrault, Oregon Health Authority: Yes. Yeah, I think I think that's a really important point to make. You know, it is ultimately voluntary. We cannot force individuals to respond to phone calls. We cannot typically force individuals to go into isolation. We provide education. We provide support. It's a lot of why we're trying to address the sort of social supports that a person is going to need. We want it to be easy for them to make that decision. A county can consider on a case by case decision if they need to do more for a given case. But generally, participation and those sorts of things are ultimately voluntary for the individual.

Jeff Dalin, Cornelius: You mentioned that the positive rates, two percent, do you have any idea what makes up the other 98 percent? Because I'm assuming, we're still testing people that are generally sick.

Sara Beaudrault, Oregon Health Authority: That is a great question. I don't want to hazard a guess, but I would be happy to provide that to you offline.

Peter Hall, Haines: I've heard the same issues with the accuracy of testing and consistency in terms of the variety of tests and that people are testing differently.

Sara Beaudrault, Oregon Health Authority: Yes, that is all true and we are definitely tracking that sort of accuracy of the different tests that are out there and also sharing information providers and local public health authorities about the most effective way to use the tests. So, you know, one thing we've heard about is the rapid tests, which have a pretty high rate of inaccuracy. But there are ways you could use the test to make it more accurate. For example, you know, being able to get a sample in the machine for

testing quickly rather than having a longer lag time. If that happens, that increases the accuracy of those tests. So, we're always working on things like that.

David Clyne: We've been promised for months the availability of broad-based testing because that truly is what I think is needed to get a handle on this outbreak and that being testing on-demand, not necessarily symptomatic. What is the prognosis for that ever, if ever, been available to the public at large?

Sara Beaudrault, Oregon Health Authority: That is a good question. We do open up asymptomatic testing for situations where a lot of cases are occurring. So, we can get a better sense of how much disease is there among asymptomatic people. So, you know, I could answer this two ways. I think one of the questions is, will there ever be enough tests available? And that I don't know. But another question is whether it's a good idea to be continually testing asymptomatic people. And that's where our doctors tend to default to. It's not. You know testing and, you know, asymptomatic people are not necessarily giving you the information that you want because they may be asymptomatic one day and not a not asymptomatic, be positive the next day. And so, you know, to some degree, doing wide spread testing of asymptomatic people may give people a false sense of security. Testing negative does not mean you are immune, you may still become positive. So, a lot of that needs to be factored into whether we have broad testing of asymptomatic people. Many of the tests are also pretty invasive. So, I think that's another consideration, whether people want to want to go through a somewhat invasive procedure and at the risk-benefit of doing so.

Erik Swenson, Woodburn: Thanks to OHA for all the work you're doing, and with all the press we've been getting, we're happy to report that our numbers are way, way down in our zip code in and North Marion County and 57 percent drop. So, it's been great teamwork from OHA and, of course, our county and city work there. But while our area hasn't been the migrant farmworker population, that was responsible for the kind of peaks we had, we are concerned about as people come into to work, on the farms, the steps that you'll be taking. So if you speak to that a little bit. That would be great.

Sara Beaudrault, Oregon Health Authority: I'd like to commend you, Mayor, because you have done an amazing job in your area of the state. And I've been so impressed by the amount of community engagement that's been happening to connect with different

groups in your communities. So, well done on that. I'm not sure I can speak to the specifics because we know that the work happening in Marion County is going to be done closely led by the local response. And I always say we'll be supporting that work and without information about how the local public health authority is going to be moving forward. I'm not comfortable speaking on their behalf.

Sara Beaudrault, Oregon Health Authority: More broadly, you know, working with agricultural employers, we are doing a lot upfront, too, around prevention, so making sure that they have different prevention standards in place and plans for separating people who test positive. Making sure that there is a lot of opportunities for hygiene, that there are opportunities to bring food, and that's in safe ways. So there's a lot of upfront work happening with agricultural employers. And then, you know, if they do start having cases, we're prepared to step in and help them mitigate the outbreak.

Mike Cully: One question did come in, Sarah, from the chat line again, and this is obviously from the coast, but this question wants to know how the cooperation between Western states is going here on the coast. We have license plates from all over, and that's from Rod Cross.

Sara Beaudrault, Oregon Health Authority: That's a great question. I don't know. I'm happy to look into it and respond, offline or bring it back next week. You know, if the governor's office is still on the call, they may know more about the Western state's cooperation.

Mike Cully: We will track that down Rod; I'll get you the information. One source or another will have it.

Sonya McCormick, Oregon Office of Emergency Management

Mike Cully: I have a question and its form the chat line, and that is can private sector entities purchase PPE - Could they bundle a purchase with a city?

Sonya McCormick, OEM: That's a good question with the city. They would have to connect with the private sector but can purchase PPE from that site. And I will share that link.

Mike Cully: Excellent. And again, as you share links, we'll put them up on our Web site as well. So, we know what you've got going as well.

Spencer Nebel, Newport: We have been going through and intimating our CAREs Act funding requests, but we get a little confused between the CAREs Act funding and the FEMA Public Assistance funding as well. Any direction on how we should sort out the issues between the two sources of funding?

Sonya McCormick, OEM: You know, Spencer, that is a great question, I know there was some confusion associated with that. If I could get your contact information. I can have Julie reach out to you.

Jim McCauley, LOC Legislative Director

Janet Chenard, Monmouth: I've been speaking a little bit with Mark Gharst and I appreciate his time. But I've also reached out to several of my colleagues. And I have a very specific question that I'm hoping maybe there's been some decisions made since the [CARES Act] applications are due today for the money regarding public safety dollars and how much of our public safety or our police department will be compensated for. So, I understand some cities are applying for 100 percent of what they paid for their police departments over the last two months versus others who are kind of looking at having track time that is specifically related to COVID 19. Do you have any additional guidance on that, Jim?

Jim McCauley, LOC: I don't. Mark is your best. Go to walking into the details, especially on that piece. We know that there has been a variety of responses from local governments out there on any number of these allowable eligible expenses. that are out there and I think it's helpful to have the local government working with their legal team trying to come up with the will see a reasonable reimbursement based on what your

public safety response is, for example but the best person from his standpoint is Mark's work.

Janet Chenard, Monmouth: Ok, well, Mark did give some guidance, but he was being very circumspect, and I was hoping something were more clear at this point. Thank you.

Paul Chalmers, Pendleton: Just curious about what proactive pieces that you need the city to participate in to help this effort. This collective effort with AOC and SDAO all to make sure we get this traction that you need.

Jim McCauley, LOC: I think there are two pieces. I think right now the best thing I can suggest for any of the cities out there is to keep the communication going with the legislators, let them know how critically important these funds are, not just for, I'll say, reimbursement of the costs, but that community and community need. I mean, there's almost four hundred thousand people in this state that have filed for unemployment. And the scale of, let's say, relief on the economic side for Oregon has been pretty dismal in the scheme of things, and I think the more value and the more education you can provide the legislators right now. That'll be great. As soon as we have a physical proposal, that'll be the next stage. And that's going to be a kind of an all-points bulletin for folks to contact their legislators and make sure that they can support this coalition effort because it's going to take a pretty heavy lift.

Paul Chalmers, Pendleton: I just you know, I think if there's a necessity to have another county city approach, visual, visual, I think that needs to happen in Salem, so.

Mike Cully: Hey, we have a question, Jim came in on the chat line from the city of Brownsville asking if you have any idea when folks may start to get funding when they can see these dollars. And will there be another application for future funding needs?

Jim McCauley, LOC: So, I wish I had a date for you at the end of the day we're going to have a better sense of how much money has been requested for reimbursement. The state physically has the money, without question. And I'm hopeful that they'll be able to turnaround those reimbursement checks within a couple of weeks. But I do not have a physical date. The second part of your question with future reimbursement. There's no question that's really what we're kind of working on. As I mentioned earlier, our concept

with what this framework effort is to say kind of conceptually get you a physical bank account on a per capita basis with some funds so you physically have a budget of whatever X dollars it comes out to be and then give you, as a local community, a chance to prioritize where that funding needs to go, whether it's a Main Street business grant or if it's for rent relief, food bank, child care services and things of that nature. There's a host of elements that are all eligible expenses. There's no question there will be a second phase and perhaps additional phases as we go through this process for reimbursement. And like I said, more of a distribution type of model.

Rod Cross, Toledo: Hi, Rod Cross, Mayor, City of Toledo. I understand you want to use a per capita method as probably the cleanest way to do things. But I know here in Lincoln County, we have the dubious distinction of having the highest unemployment in the state due to the Kobe situation. And a lot of our cities here on the Oregon coast are millions of dollars underwater in their budgets for the upcoming year. So, I'm just curious if the effects of this crisis are going to also be taken into account, not just as a per capita number?

Jim McCauley, LOC: Great question. The short answer is yes. We're trying to come up with a metric that we can take into account the hardest-hit areas. I think the difficulty that we're going to have is what metric do we use to use unemployment? Do we something else, the poverty. I mean, there are all sorts of things that you can do, but it's something that we are as a group trying to address because it's not lost on any others. There are parts of the state economically that have a higher suffering level than anybody else. I think there's a should be a way to help try to account for that. So, yeah, we want to try to do that. I just don't know what kind of detail it's going to look like.

Mike Cully: And we have about nine days to figure this out. I think at least in this initial go-round. So, appreciate your feedback and input.