

# **Union County**

# **Reopening Plan**

**Prepared based on Governor Kate Brown's**  
***Public Health Framework for Reopening Oregon***

# Purpose

**The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for those involved in the process of reopening Union County. Benchmarks and guidance within the plan will need to be addressed in the implementation of their individual operations plans.**

**Due to the fluid COVID-19 operating environment, these guidelines will be handled as an adaptive management plan and this plan will be a living document. As information is made available, best practices emerge, new guidance is issued, new or altered state orders or standards are issued this information would be discussed, addressed and then implemented through this plan.**

# Table of Contents

<b>Section I Overview .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Section II Gating Criteria &amp; Preparedness .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Gating Criteria	
Symptoms .....	5
Cases .....	7
Hospitals .....	8
Core State Preparedness	
Testing and Contact Tracing .....	9
Health Care System Capacity .....	10
Plans .....	11
<b>Section III Reopening Phases .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Phased Lifting of Restrictions	
Hold, Move Forward or Return.....	15

## **Section I: Overview**

### **Union County**

Union County, located in northeastern Oregon, encompasses 2,038 square miles. It is bordered by Baker and Grant County to the south, Wallowa County to the north and Umatilla County to the west. Union County has approximately 26,000 year-round residents. Approximately 50% of the population resides in the City of La Grande (located 2,788 feet above sea level).

The County is mountainous, with the Blue Mountains situated on the western and northern portions, the Wallowa Mountains along the east and the Eagle Caps and the Elkhorn Mountains on the southern end of the County. The County contains approximately 53% forestland and nearly half of the County is under federal land management. The balance is predominately valley floor used for crop production with some transitional grazing land. The primary drainage is the Grande Ronde River basin, with Catherine Creek being a major tributary. Numerous other tributaries drain into the Grande Ronde River.

Interstate 84 is the major thoroughfare through the County which travels east to west. There are five state highways leading to Wallowa, Baker, and Grant Counties. The Union Pacific Railroad main line also travels through Union County. Grande Ronde Hospital is the only hospital in Union County. Grande Ronde Hospital also operates three of the four clinics in Union County including the Walk-in Clinic, Elgin Clinic and Union Clinic. Grande Ronde Hospital provides all but a very small percentage of health care county-wide.

Thus far, Union County has had four historic positive cases of COVID 19 with three being listed as recovered (as of 4/28/20). This fact may be as a result of the county's sparse and spread out population (natural social distancing) and adherence to the government's guidelines on preventative measures to reduce exposure. This fortunate fact provides some relief to the residents of Union County from the loss and suffering being experienced around the state and across the country. This does not relieve Union County of the necessity to comply with sound and practical efforts to control exposure through physical distancing, isolation, hygiene, and other precautionary measures. These measures are implemented as appropriate based on factors such as age group, underlying health conditions, and all of the other relevant considerations.

The economic and social impacts of the efforts to slow or stop the spread have been crippling to our rural economy. At this point, with the favorable COVID-19 health condition in Union County, the economic and social impacts are even more challenging to bear. As a result, Union County seeks relief from the Governor's Stay Home, Stay Safe Order and instead proposes mitigations that will seek to minimize the impacts and spread of COVID-19.

This document is prepared in response to Governor Kate Brown's solicitation of working strategies from Oregon counties, which support and enhance the "Public Health Framework for Reopening Oregon."

## Section II: Gating Criteria & Preparedness

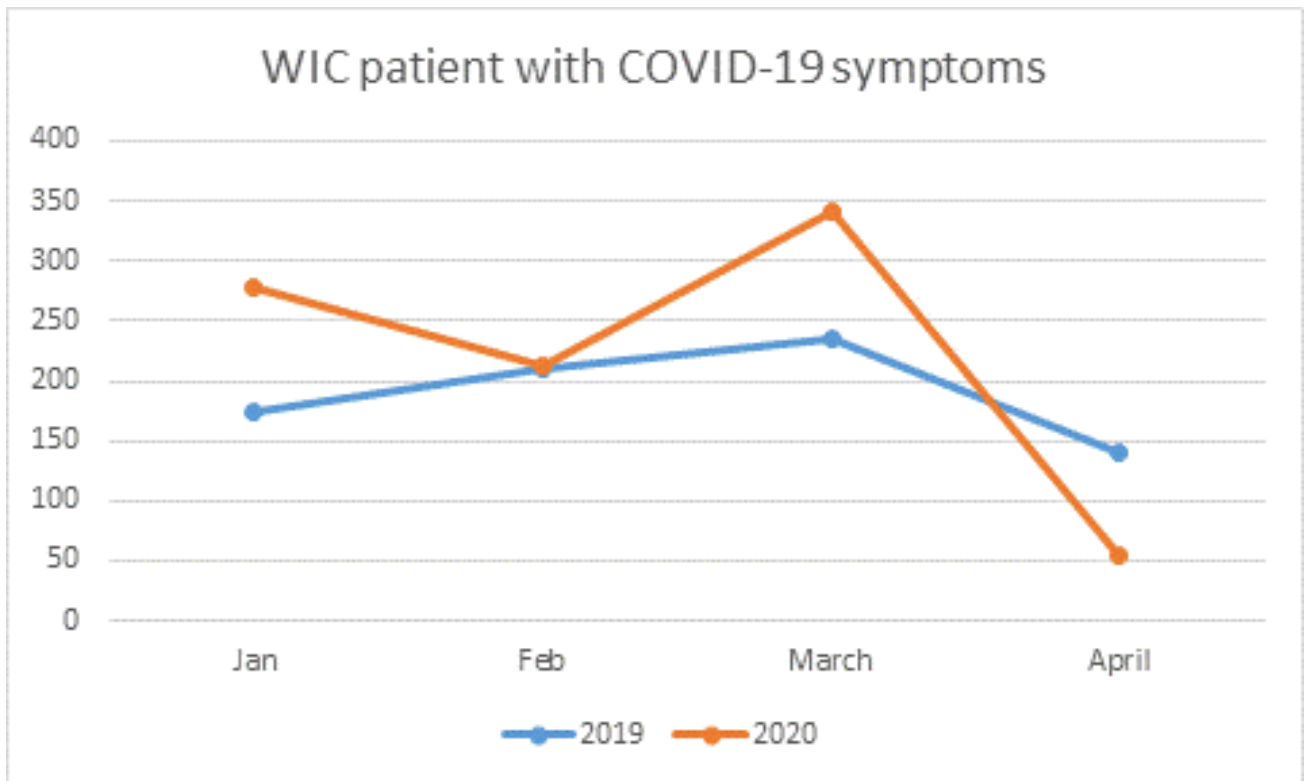
### A. Gating Criteria

#### 1. Symptoms

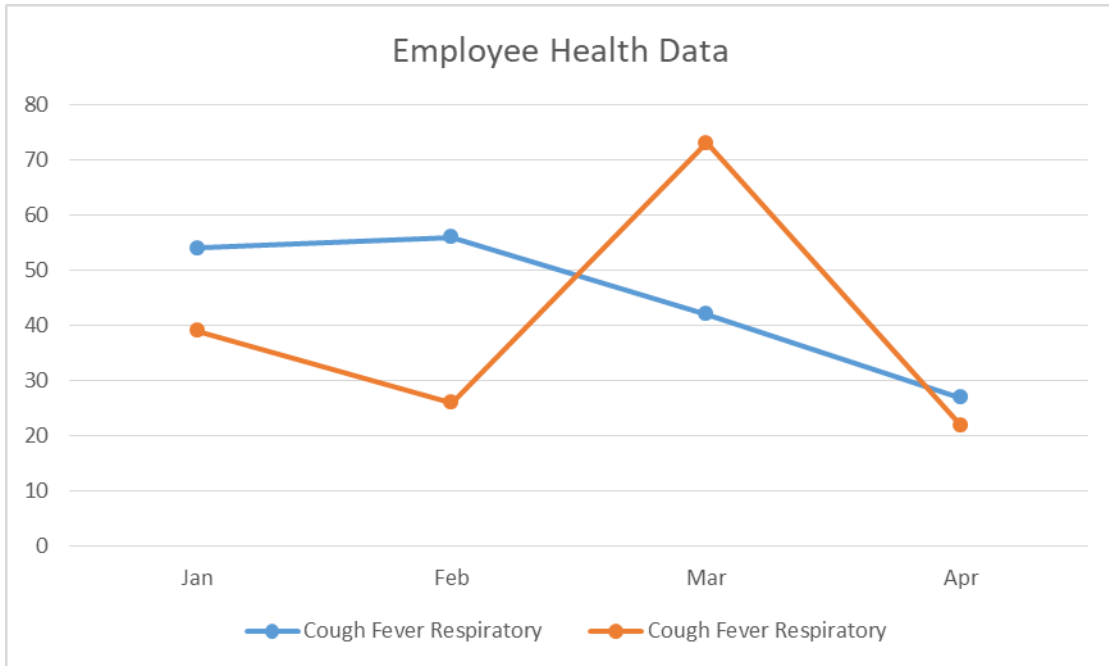
*(Downward trajectory of influenza-like illnesses (ILI) AND COVID-like syndromic cases reported within a 14-day period)*

#### Current Symptoms Situation

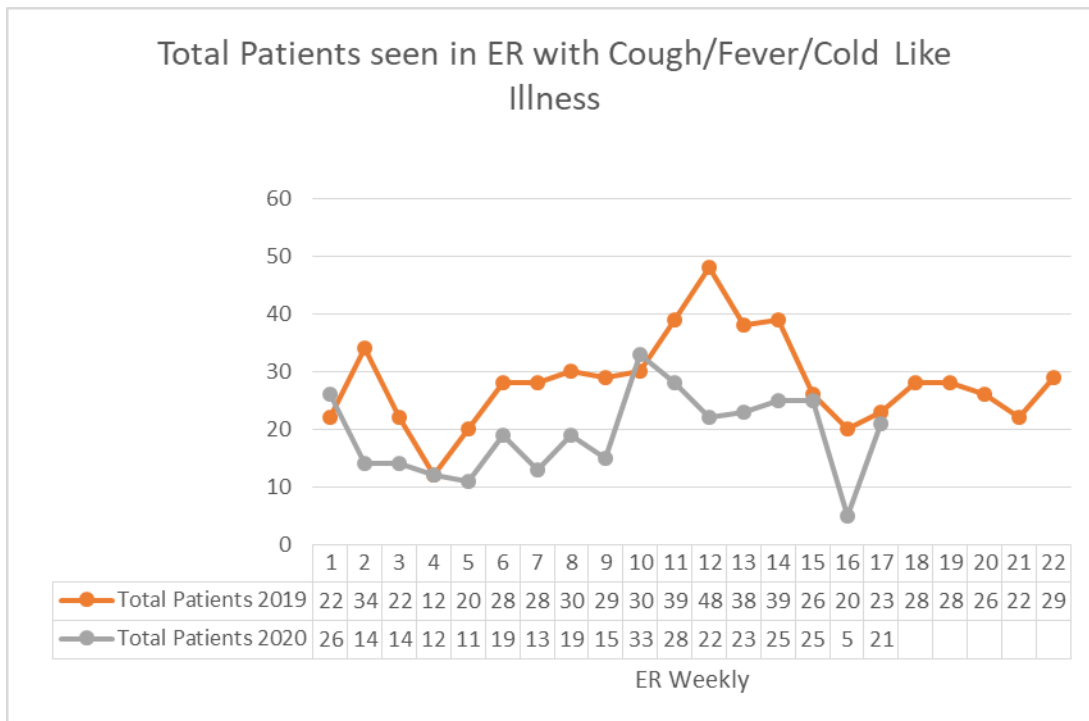
Union County has seen a steady decline of individuals reporting Upper Respiratory Illness (URI) over the last month. This is indicated by all sources including walk-in clinic data, Grande Ronde Hospital (GRH) employee data, Emergency Room patients seen, and GRH patients admitted.



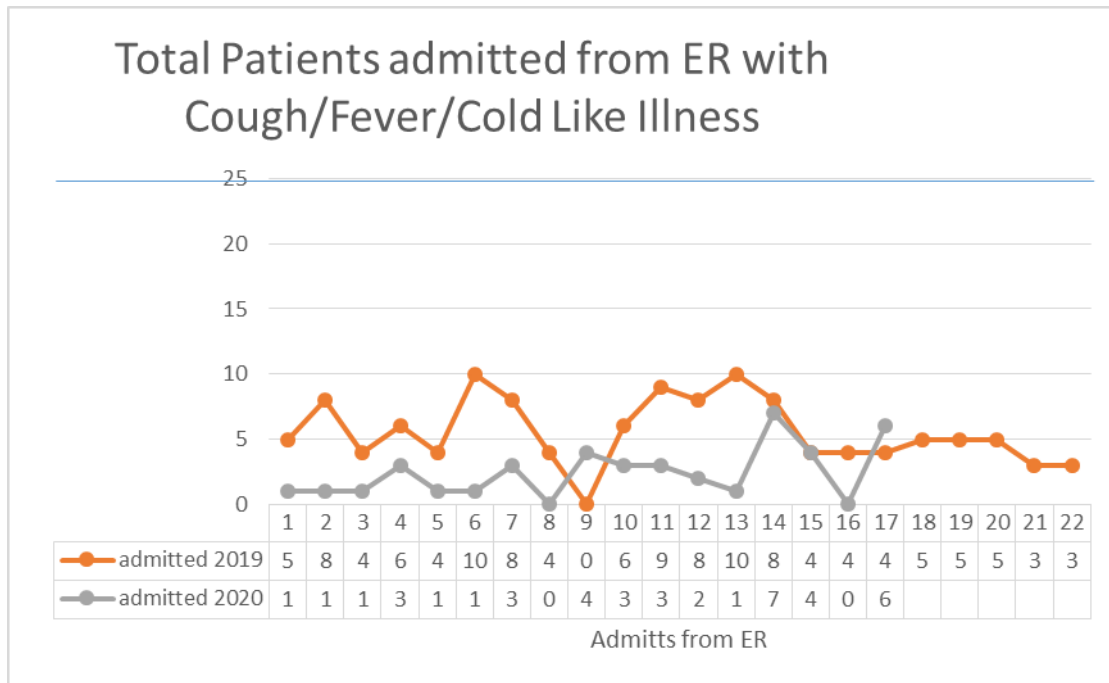
GRH Walk-in Clinic has seen a steady decline in patients with COVID like symptoms from a peak in March, 2020 of 342 to 55 patients in April, falling below the 2019 level for the same time period.



GRH employee health data matches the walk-in clinic with a peak in March, 2020 to a significant decline in April, 2020 which actually progressed below 2019 levels.



GRH emergency room patients seen with URI has been and remains below 2019 levels with a clear downward trend from a peak at 33 patients in a week, to a low of 5 patients. Even at the peak in week 10 (March), GRH emergency room remained well below capacity.



Patients admitted to the hospital has also remained extremely low with only a peak of seven patients admitted during week 14 with cough/fever/cold-like illness. Clearly, GRH is trending well below patient capacity of twenty-five as represented by the blue line at the top of the graph. GRH is a 25 bed Critical Access hospital.

Therefore, Union County and Grande Ronde Hospital have remained well below hospital capacity and illnesses are trending down meeting the Governors Criteria.

## 2. Cases

*(Downward trajectory of documented cases within a 14-day period OR positive tests as a percent of total tests within a 14-day period (flat or increasing volume of tests))*

### Current Case Situation

Reports from our local hospital, Grande Ronde Hospital – City of La Grande, as well as our medical clinics have shown a downward trajectory of influenza-like illness or COVID-like symptoms over the past 14 days. Union County cases were detected as follows:

March 19, 2020 – 1<sup>st</sup> positive case

April 1, 2020 – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> positive case

April 9 – 4<sup>th</sup> positive case

No positive cases have been reported in the past 20 days meeting the 14-day criteria.

Union County has been fortunate to have only four historic positive tests to date with three considered recovered. While COVID-19 has spreading rapidly in other areas of the state, the decisive measures implemented have slowed the rate state-wide. In Eastern Oregon, we have generally experienced slow growth in the nearby counties with positive cases. Total cases are in the single digits (with the exception

of Umatilla County) and there are numerous days or even weeks between positive cases. The health and safety of our community is the priority, and this trend of slow or no growth must continue. However, it would be unrealistic to think that we will maintain our current infection rate. Union County has a local Incident Management Team in place consisting of a Public Health group, Hospital group, EMS/Fire group, and Law group, in addition to the traditional Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance Sections. The Incident Management Team is continuously monitoring the situation and identified **Management Assessment Points** as part of an information-based, phased approach to reopening.

### Plan for Reopening

A phased approach to reopening our economy will keep the COVID-19 positive growth rate curve or line relatively flat. If no management assessment points are reached within a two-week period, which would be the incubation period of the virus, then it would be permissible to move to the next phase. Taking small, calculated steps will allow the economy to start reopening through a strategic approach that protects the health of the community.

The Incident Management Team will continuously evaluate the data including, positive tests, hospitalized cases, ventilator capacity and local and area hospital capacity. They could change the Management Action Points based on information, such as positive COVID tests from healthcare workers or residents and/or staff of a Long Term Care Facility (LTCF).

In consultation with the Incident Management Team, a consensus was reached on the following management action points should positive cases occur.

**Management Action Points: Positive Cases per week: 8**

**Hospitalized Cases: 4**

**Patients on a Ventilator due to ILI: 2**

**Surrounding area Hospitals Capacity: 40%**

If these management action points are reached, a HOLD (described in Section III) will be placed on moving forward with any other business sector reopening and allow time for contact tracing (described in B - 1) to occur. Based on the data provided through contact tracing and testing, the Incident Management Team in consultation with Agency Administrators will determine the need to continue to hold, or take steps backward, until we reach a steady state.

### 3. Hospitals

*(Treat all patients without crisis care AND robust testing program in place for at-risk healthcare workers)*

### Current Status

Robust testing has been defined for the entire State of Oregon at 15,000 tests per week. Based on Union County's population, our testing requirements would be up to 95 tests per week for those that meet the criteria set by Oregon Health Authority (OHA).



## **Plan for Reopening**

Grande Ronde Hospital has been independently producing test kits since the beginning of the Pandemic. Grande Ronde Hospital had the foresight to acquire the necessary components in bulk quantities prior to the pandemic and associated shortages. Test kits have been produced in sufficient quantities to supplement Public Health's state provided test kits. Union County is utilizing OHA and CDC guidance for COVID-19 testing.

Union County Incident Management Team will continue to use the state's existing Ops Center to make resource requests as necessary, but to date and for the foreseeable future, testing kit availability is not a limiting factor towards reopening and therefore meets the Governor's criteria for reopening.

## **B. Core State Preparedness**

### **1. Testing & Contact Tracing**

- Screening and testing for symptomatic individuals*
- Test syndromic/influenza-like illness-indicated persons*
- Ensure sentinel surveillance sites are screening for asymptomatic cases (sites operate at locations that serve older individuals, lower-income Americans, racial minorities, and Native Americans)*
- Contact tracing of all COVID+ cases*

Center for Human Development, Public Health (CHDPH) will continue to take the lead on **Case Investigations** and **Contact Tracing** pursuant to guidelines provided by OHA through the Public Health Group within the Incident Management Team.

CHDHD will provide the staff for Case Investigations and Contact Tracing. This team will be led by the Communicable Disease (CD) Nurse. CHDHD will be augmenting the CD Nurse with additional CHD staff to achieve the Governor's target staffing ratio of 15 contract tracing staff per 100,000 of population. According to the most recent data, Union County's population was reported at 26,835. In accordance with the Governor's 15 per 100,000 staffing benchmark, this would equate to four staff available for contract tracing in Union County. CHDHD currently has 3.0 FTE available for this work. In our first two phases, our plan encourages key sectors to support efficiency in our contract tracing efforts to help manage the work within our current capacity. The Law enforcement group has committed to providing additional investigative surge staffing as necessary to support the Public Health Groups operations.

If needed, we will call on staff from the Eastern Oregon Modernization Collaborative, OHA and other partner agencies to support contact tracing. When current staff are required to return to their other job responsibilities we may hire additional staff as resources are available or coordinate OHA Acute and Communicable Disease Program for additional assistance. OHA has indicated they will be hiring and training additional staff dedicated to contact tracing to supply surge capacity. Union County is able to meet the Governor's mandate for contact tracing and therefore meets the Governor's criteria for reopening.

## 2. Healthcare System Capacity

*-Sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*

*-Ability to surge ICU capacity*

### **Personal Protective Equipment**

The current PPE supply chain and County PPE cache is adequate for the needs identified in the phases described below in Section III. In each sector we have prioritized certain types, so if the resupply rate of PPE becomes strained, a structured slowdown of PPE use can occur. Many sectors do not need medical grade PPE. With the implementation of cloth/reusable face coverings; there will not be an additional drain on the current supply chain for medical grade PPE. The sector with the most need for medical grade PPE is the hospital and associated medical services.

Union County has created the following PPE prioritization matrix. First priority is the Hospital and associated medical services. Second priority is EMS, Public Health and funeral homes. Third priority is law enforcement. Fourth priority is disproportionately affected or vulnerable populations including congregate care facilities. Priority five is all other PPE requests with an associated decision matrix.

Until the supply chain is fully back to normal, reuse guidelines will remain in effect. This will also include PPE maximization strategies and re-use. Re-use will be accomplished through a UV torch that will disinfect PPE to extend the life of available PPE even further than normal re-use guidelines. Additionally, GRH is working through the ability to re-use PPE through utilizing the autoclave. The Hospital Group has loaned a Positive Air Purifying Respirator (PAPR) to the Public Health Group for the duration of the incident to minimize the use of PPE during testing.

Current and projected PPE levels sustain local operations and are not a limiting factor towards reopening and thereby meeting the Governor's criteria for reopening.

### **Surge Plans**

#### Grande Ronde Hospital Surge Plan Summary

Grande Ronde Hospital is licensed for 25 combined Medical/Surgical and ICU beds. In the event of a "surge" of patients with known or suspected coronavirus, GRH is prepared to increase its capacity through a multi-tiered response plan overseen by the Hospital Group. The plan allows us to adequately provide medical and nursing care in the event the pandemic 'surge' requires increased hospital bed capacity. This is a phased approach and would be carefully evaluated at each phase for resource availability, both internally and externally and is supported by federal and CMS 1135 waiver that allow Critical Access Hospitals to expand beyond their licensed beds.

GRH was targeted to provide for surge capacity at 150% of current state at the end of March 2020. This would equate to 38 combined ICU and Medical/Surgical beds total. GRH has developed a surge plan that exceeds this targeted surge capacity. The surge plan was submitted to the Oregon Health Authority previously.

In working with Union County Emergency Management an alternate care site has been established that is in close proximity to Grande Ronde Hospital. This facility has an initial capacity for 58 additional beds. Additional resources have been acquired and are available to setup an additional alternate care site should it become necessary. At the point we established a second alternate care site; Union County would request additional staffing through an Op Center request

## Grande Ronde Hospital/Union County Surge Plan Summary

The purpose of the Union County Medical Surge Plan is to strengthen medical surge response capability for COVID-19, through a coordinated, collaborative, regional approach. This surge plan coordinates the response actions for GRH, and regional hospitals.

Grande Ronde Hospital – La Grande, OR. (GRH) principally serves Union County, Oregon as the only Hospital in the county. Grande Ronde Hospital is an independent, not for profit, critical access hospital. Grande Ronde Hospital has been identified by OHA as the Region 9 Regional Resource Hospital. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been sent to OHA for approval.

GRH previously developed a detailed Surge Plan that will serve as a guide for COVID-19. The support and coordination of GRH in a medical surge event is critical to the efforts of Union County to respond to disaster. GRH developed a phased approach to open rooms and segregate patients as in the case of the pandemic event. GRH staff (Hospital Group) are working directly with the Oregon Health Authority.

### Alternative Care Site

The Grande Ronde Hospital Pavilion is on standby for use as an alternate care site for lower acuity hospital patients transferred from the hospital. Eastern Oregon Universities Quinn Coliseum is also available for use as a secondary alternate care/surge site, should that become necessary. La Grande School District has also made their facilities available if necessary. All three alternate care sites are in the City of La Grande, in close proximity to Grande Ronde Hospital.

### Ambulance Care Providers:

#### Emergency Response Transport Ground Ambulance Resources

La Grande Fire Department – Union County ALS	4 transport vehicles
Elgin Ambulance – Elgin area BLS	2 transport vehicle
Union Ambulance – Union area BLS	2 transport vehicles
LifeFlight Network – Air ALS Ambulance	4 transport vehicles

### Mutual Aid Agreement

Mutual Aid Agreements between the various emergency response jurisdictions is critical for a medical surge event since any one Union County agency/department may not have the human and equipment resources to respond to multiple calls for service.

### Public Information

The Incident Management Team is coordinated and vetted as a part of ICS operations. This is accomplished through the NE Oregon Joint Information Center (JIC) representing Union and Wallowa Counties. The messages from each partner agency are shared with others so a common unified message is shared from the Public Information Officers (PIOs) to the public. PIOs from Union County Emergency

Services, CHDPH, Cities, GRH and other partners, work together in distributing and unifying public information.

### 3. Plans

- Protect the health and safety of workers in critical industries
- Protect the health and safety of those living and working in high-risk facilities (e.g. senior care facilities)
- Protect employees and users of mass transit
- Advise citizens regarding protocols for social distancing and face coverings
- Monitor conditions and immediately take steps to limit and mitigate any rebounds or outbreaks by restarting a phase or returning to an earlier phase, depending on severity

Nursing Homes or Long Term Care Facilities (LTCF) - During this roll out (see Section 3, Phase 3) we would encourage these facilities to stay on lock down for two reasons. First, it keeps these vulnerable populations safe in this uncharted reopening with a virus we are still learning about. Second, it would keep PPE usage down and available for hospitals and clinics should a surge event occur.

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS are:

- People 60 years and older
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- People of all ages with [underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled](#), including:
  - People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
  - People who have serious heart conditions
  - People who are immunocompromised
    - Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
- People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- People with liver disease
- People who are pregnant
- Workers in critical infrastructure
- Jails
- Prisons
- Older People with underlying medical conditions
- Mass Transit

### Homeless

Should an individual or family that is experiencing homelessness contract COVID-19 or be identified as a contact of a known COVID-19 case, Union County will use the Incident Management Team, who will work with local partners that have been identified as potentially having non-congregate care solutions. Partner agencies would provide the necessities of daily living, food, laundry, and medications while they are kept in isolation. We will also connect them with housing and food assistance programs or other services as requested by the family.

### Isolation Strategy

Unless there is a need for medical services, it is recommended that those who test positive for COVID-19 and/or have signs and symptoms, stay at home until they have been symptom free for at least 72 hours (3 days). By following these strategies it will help protect the health and safety of workers in critical industries, high risk facilities, mass transit, and all other sectors.

Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Complete resolution of respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and**,
- At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

- OR -

**Persons who have COVID-19 who have symptoms** and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:

- Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Complete resolution of respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) **and**
- Negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized molecular assay for COVID-19 from at least two consecutive nasopharyngeal swab specimens collected  $\geq 24$  hours apart\*\*\* (total of two negative specimens). See Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens from Persons Under Investigation (PUIs) for 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) for specimen collection guidance.

**Persons with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms** may discontinue isolation when at least 7 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test and have had no subsequent illness provided they remain asymptomatic. For 3 days following discontinuation of isolation, these persons should continue to limit contact (stay 6 feet away from others) and limit potential of dispersal of respiratory secretions by wearing a covering for their nose and mouth whenever they are in settings where other persons are present. In community settings, this covering may be a barrier, such as a bandana, scarf, or cloth face coverings. The covering does not refer to a medical mask or respirator.

## Section III: Reopening Phases

### A. Phased Lifting of Restrictions

During all phases, the Union County Incident Management Team will provide **messaging** to continue to remind community members to practice the **principles of good hygiene to limit the spread of the virus**: wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, especially after touching frequently used items or surfaces; avoid touching your face; sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow; disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible; and strongly consider using face coverings while in public, particularly when social distancing is not easy to maintain or when using mass transit. Additional messages will center on **‘People Who Feel Sick Should Stay Home’**: do not go to work, school or grocery store. Stay home except for seeking medical services; contact and follow the advice of your medical provider; stay home until you are symptom free for 72 hours (3 days); and continue to adhere to State and local guidance as well as complementary CDC guidance, particularly with respect to face coverings. Continual education of Employers and Individuals throughout this process will be provided to ensure we continue to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

### Phase One

#### *General Guidelines – Individuals*

See Oregon Health Authority Phase I – Guidance for the General Public

See Oregon Health Authority Phase I – Guidance for Employers

#### *Guidance to Specific Sectors*

See Oregon Health Authority Phase I – Guidance for Restaurants, Bars, Breweries, Brewpubs, Wineries and Tasting Rooms

See Oregon Health Authority Phase I – Guidance for Childcare

See Oregon Health Authority Phase I – Guidance for Retail

See Oregon Health Authority Phase I – Guidance for Outdoor Recreation

Additional guidance will be provided and referenced as it becomes available.

Government, Commercial and Professional Offices - Maintain social distancing of 6’, recommend the use of cloth face coverings if social distancing cannot be maintained, as well installing physical barriers where needed, frequent cleaning of commonly touched surfaces, encourage employees to self-monitor for *influenza-like illnesses (ILI) AND COVID-like* signs and symptoms. No contact tracing is required unless a COVID + case occurs. Building will be accessed through appointment only.

## **Holding, Moving Forward or Returning to a Previous Phase**

Implement phase for three weeks and monitor Management Assessment Points (MAP's). Based on the MAP, the Incident Management Team (IMT) will advise as follows:

**Move Forward** – After three weeks if there are acceptable levels of change in Gating Criteria or Core State Preparedness and the (IMT) advises that reopening steps may continue, Union County will move to Phase Two.

**Hold** – This would mean that additional time is required to adequately determine if the Gating Criteria and Core State Preparedness requirements are able to be met/maintained. This will be evaluated weekly to determine what the correct actions should be implemented.

**Reduction of Phase One Step 1**– In Step 1, All Professional/Personal Services would be asked to reduce current patrons or appointments by 50%. IMT would monitor any changes and advise to hold before returning to Phase One. The gating and preparedness criteria would be evaluated weekly

**Reductions Phase One Step 2** – Should the COVID-19 Curve not change based on Step 1 above then the Incident Management Team will review the contact tracing to try and determine which sector of business (as discussed above) might continue to contribute to an increase in the COVID-19 curve. Those sectors would be asked to close. While the other sectors would continue to follow Reduction of Phase One Step 1. Incident Management Team would determine to hold before returning to Reductions Phase One Step 1. Gating and preparedness criteria would be evaluated weekly

**Reductions Phase One Step 3** – Return to “stay-at-home” until Gating Criteria and Core State Preparedness steps are met and restart Phase One with Reductions Phase One Step 2 and work backwards until we reach full Phase One. After three weeks, re-assess Gating Criteria and Core State Preparedness steps and move to Phase Two. These gating and preparedness criteria would be evaluated weekly

At the discretion of the County Commissioners and based on the recommendation of the Incident Management Team, the County may take any action deemed necessary and prudent to protect the health and well-being of Union County while considering constitutional implications and individual rights. This could include, but is not limited to skipping steps in reducing phased openings, extending evaluation times, extending hold times, implementing not yet identified mitigations or reinstating stay home, stay safe. The intent of the plan is to be flexible and adaptive and not limit the opportunities to protect life and minimize suffering.

## **Phase Two**

Awaiting Oregon Health Authority Guidance or County will develop if guidance if not available

## **Phase Three**

Awaiting Oregon Health Authority Guidance or County will develop if guidance if not available