



Oregon's Omicron Response Plan (Dec. 17, 2021)

The Omicron variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 has been detected in Oregon. The latest forecast from scientists shows that the Omicron variant will cause more hospitalizations than the Delta variant, which led to the deaths of nearly 2,500 people in Oregon since the summer of 2021. Oregon health officials have a plan to slow the spread of Omicron and protect people in Oregon. State health officials will update this plan as we learn more about Omicron.

1. Oregon will urge one million Oregonians to get boosters by the end of January:

Omicron is more contagious than the Delta variant. More infections will lead to more hospitalizations unless enough people are protected by boosters.

- As of Dec. 16, more than three million people in Oregon have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and more than 2.5 million (or 74%) have received two doses (ranking Oregon 12th in the nation).
- Approximately 28% (or 945,759) of vaccinated people in Oregon have received a booster or third dose.
- Approximately one million people in Oregon who have not yet received their booster will be eligible for a booster by the end of January 2022, due to the time that has passed since they completed their initial COVID-19 series.

To reach Oregon's one million booster goal, state health officials will:

- Push for new capacity in the healthcare system and local public health so they have capacity to **double or triple their current weekly booster vaccinations**.
- Add three new high-capacity vaccination sites (in addition to the six current ones operating around the state) and resume mobile vaccination clinics.
- Expand and deploy contracted healthcare staff to vaccination clinics to expand vaccination appointments and clinic hours. Currently, Oregon has enough doses – the lack of staff to put doses in arms is our primary constraint that's led to scarce appointments in many Oregon communities.
- Expand our supply of mRNA vaccines – Oregon asked the federal government to increase Oregon's supply by 250,000 doses every two weeks. These additional doses will help Oregon meet current demand and keep up with the increase we need.

Oregon has enough COVID-19 vaccine doses to administer one million boosters by the end of January. State health officials are bolstering staffing at vaccine clinics. Oregon's

ability to attain this goal will depend on demand for boosters by eligible people in Oregon.

2. Oregon will prioritize boosters for people who are most vulnerable to becoming hospitalized if they catch the Omicron variant:

Our most urgent priority is to protect older adults (especially people in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities) with booster doses, as well as people in communities of color that have experienced the greatest disparities in vaccination rates.

- As of Dec. 16, 51% of people in Oregon age 65 or older (403,856) have received a booster or a third dose.

In the coming weeks Oregon will urgently expand the number of our most vulnerable older adults by:

- Deploying mobile vaccination strike teams to skilled nursing facilities and other long-term care facilities in the next two weeks.
- Working with long-term care facilities to implement their vaccination plans and provide staffing solutions.
- Providing incentives to get more residents and staff vaccinated.

For under-vaccinated communities, we will:

- Augment staffing at federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and other clinics to help them vaccinate approximately 800-1,000 people per day.
- Work with community-based organizations and trusted community leaders to hold 35 vaccination events for communities of color around the state, with an additional 93 events scheduled in coming weeks.

Too many people of color were left behind in the initial vaccine roll-out. These efforts will also support our continuing urgent priority to protect unvaccinated people of color with their initial doses.

3. Rapidly deliver new COVID-19 treatments and dramatically expand needed testing.

New and coming monoclonal therapies and antiviral drugs offer the promise of protection against hospitalization. For some drugs, they are effective within a narrow window of time after infection. OHA is:

- Working to develop a high throughput site for monoclonal antibody therapy in the Portland Metro area. This site will be open seven days a week, 11 hours a day and have the capacity to treat 350 people.
- Registering Oregon healthcare providers with federal agencies so they will be able to quickly receive newly approved antiviral drugs to treat COVID-19.
- Connect patients to treatment and testing to maximize the effectiveness of these new drugs.

4. Support healthcare workers and hospitals in the face of the coming Omicron surge.

- Oregon is extending a current staffing contract to bring more nurses and other healthcare staff from out of state into Oregon's already hard-pressed hospitals and vaccination clinics.
- State health officials will continue to convene the Regional Hospital Collaborative and maintain an emergency management command center, to coordinate the use of available beds, ventilators and other needed resources.
- The state will work with long-term care facilities to provide alternative step-down beds to move patients who can be safely discharged out of hospitals and free desperately needed beds.
- Before mid-January, state health officials will provide hospitals an interim crisis care tool they can use to equitably prioritize care if doctors and nurses are forced to make heart-breaking decisions in the face of limited intensive care beds, ventilators and other life-saving resources.

5. Connect more people to boosters, treatments and testing.

- Oregon will shift its outreach focus to connect more people to boosters, beginning with digital outreach to priority populations.

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