

COVID-19 infections and deaths spiral out of control in Oregon

David Fitzgerald
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The state of Oregon recorded its highest number of recorded cases on Monday. The new record of 5,495 cases far surpasses the previous high of 2,147 cases recorded on December 4, 2020. The state also reported 40 new deaths on Monday. Hospitals across the state are in danger of becoming overwhelmed. Democratic Governor Kate Brown's administration has responded to the crisis by rejecting lockdowns and social distancing measures while maintaining an unwavering commitment to the full reopening of schools, which begins today.

Funeral homes have seen such a rise in deaths that refrigeration trucks are necessary to store the bodies of those who have succumbed to the virus. Two Oregon counties, Tillamook and Josephine counties, have requested refrigeration trucks. The director of emergency management for Tillamook County, Gordon McCraw, informed Portland Fox 12 that 20 percent of those tested for COVID-19 in the county are testing positive.

The virus is now devastating rural communities across Oregon. Southern Oregon communities such as Ashland, Medford and Grants Pass have intensive care units that are 100 percent full of COVID-19 patients. Dr. Michael Blumhardt, the ICU medical director at these hospitals, told NPR what is now a familiar truth: hospitals are treating COVID-19 patients in their 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s.

A new study by the Oregon Health & Science University has found that Oregon will need at least 400 to 500 more staffed hospital beds by Labor Day, September 6, if cases continue rising at the current rate. Hospitals are already having to turn patients away due to lack of beds. According to the Oregon Department of Human Services, there are only 39 available ICU beds left out of 671 in the entire state. Only 314 non-ICU

hospital beds are now available out of 4,240. The fact that hospitals are woefully understaffed and undersupplied is an indictment of not only Kate Brown's administration, but the Democratic Party as a whole.

The state government has responded to this crisis by doing as little as possible to slow down the spread of the virus. Charles Boyle, speaking for the Brown administration, offered up pseudoscience on Monday, claiming that economic restrictions are no longer as effective now as they were last year. Boyle claimed that the most effective way to fight the Delta variant is through vaccination alone. This is an outright lie.

As Dr. Malgorzata Gasperowicz clearly explained in a meeting hosted by the WSWWS, "vaccines alone can't stop Delta. It's mathematically impossible." In fact, a focus on public health measures alone, such as lockdowns on all non-essential production and a stay-at-home order, is far more effective than even vaccinating 85 percent of the population with a vaccine of 60 percent effectiveness. Stamping out the virus will require a combination of vaccinations, lockdowns and other public health measures while providing workers with the resources they need to stay home.

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) has reported 345 cases of COVID-19 at Amazon's Troutdale facility since May. This makes Amazon PDX9 Fulfillment Center the workplace with the highest number of cases in the state. But Brown and the Democratic Party have determined that nothing can infringe upon Amazon's profits, so nothing has been done.

The crisis in Oregon is unfolding as hospitalizations have risen 500 percent over the past two months. The reopening of schools is taking place as more than 1,900 children infected with COVID-19 are in ICUs across the United States. It is estimated that between 10 and

15 percent of children develop Long COVID symptoms, which can cause permanent damage to the brain and other organs.

The mainstream media blames the unvaccinated for the spread of the Delta variant. However, the policies put forward by the Democrats and Republicans are incapable of containing, let alone eradicating, the disease. The patchwork “mitigation measures” which remain in place only facilitate the mutation of the virus into more virulent strains, since the opportunity for breakthrough infections in the vaccinated is massively expanded while the virus is allowed to run rampant among the unvaccinated, including all children under the age of 12.

The working class must fight for the eradication of the virus by putting forward its own political program and organizing on an independent basis. The only social force capable of stopping the ruling elite’s homicidal drive to keep the economy fully open and fully reopen schools in the midst of a pandemic is the working class in the US and internationally.

We urge you to contact the World Socialist Web Site to join a rank - and - file committee at your workplace. If a committee does not yet exist in your area, then we will help you to build one.



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