

PUBLIC HEALTH NEWSLETTER

Hello, Coos County Public Health Organizational Partners

Written By : Dr. Timothy Lynch



I am excited to introduce our new Coos Health & Wellness Public Health newsletter. During my first year as Director of Public Health, I had the privilege of meeting many dedicated organizations that enrich our wonderful community. A common piece of feedback I received was the need for enhanced communication and connection. We are committed to fostering strong relationships with our partners and sharing valuable updates on current projects, public health strategies, and our focus areas for community service.

Through these newsletters, we aim to illuminate services and projects you can share with the populations you serve, while also inviting your feedback and suggestions for collaboration.

As we embark on this new communication journey, please feel free to reach out to me directly with any feedback or community concerns you would like us to highlight in our upcoming monthly communications.

I am truly grateful to be part of this extraordinary community and to work alongside your organizations.

Clinic

The Coos County Public Health Clinic offers seasonal flu shots for individuals aged 6 months and older. Babies and young children are especially vulnerable to diseases that can lead to death and disability. Vaccines can protect against many childhood diseases, including chickenpox, mumps, whooping cough, polio, measles, and more. Currently, Oregon is experiencing a surge in pertussis (whooping cough) at levels not seen since the 1950s, largely due to low vaccination rates.

We provide all infant and childhood vaccines from birth through the teenage years, along with adult vaccinations, some travel immunizations, and occupational health services for Hepatitis A and B.

In addition, sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing is available for sexually active individuals who do not have symptoms. We test for HIV, Hepatitis B and C, Syphilis, Chlamydia, and Gonorrhea.

To schedule an appointment, please call us Monday through Friday at 541-266-6700.

We encourage all our partners to bookmark our website for updates, current communicable disease news, and upcoming events.

<https://cooshealthandwellness.org/public-health/>

For up-to-date information on Covid-19, Influenza, and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) cases in our area, please bookmark the following website:

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/oregon.public.health.division.acute.and.communicable.disease.pre/viz/OregonsRespiratoryVirusData/TableofContents>

The Oregon Health Authority provides comprehensive information on local respiratory virus data, including Covid-19, Influenza, and RSV. The information is organized into the following categories: community transmission, hospitalization, hospital capacity, deaths, and vaccination rates.



Public Health Emergency Preparedness

In 2024 the PHEP program was able to assemble and distribute emergency kits to vulnerable individuals and families in our community. These kits included essential items such as a first aid kit, non-perishable food, flashlights, emergency blankets, water filtration straw, multi-tool, pill box, and an emergency whistle, along with some preparedness materials.

The distribution of emergency kits enhanced the preparedness of the community, the kit got many families thinking how they can better prepare and what to do in those situations. Many recipients expressed gratitude, noting that the kits provided peace of mind and practical aid during difficult times. Overall, the multiple grants helped us build a more resilient and prepared community. We look forward to continuing efforts to strengthen our community's preparedness and build greater resilience in 2025.



W.I.C.

WIC turned 50 in 2024! We were able to provide WIC participants incentive items featuring the WIC 50th Anniversary logo.

Chloe and Rosa went to the Farmer's Market on September 25th during the National Breastfeeding Month, using the Lactation Station and offered WIC Breastfeeding participants the Breastfeeding kit that contains items like: diaper bag, Babies First-easy to read pamphlets, Diaper Diary, Born to Breastfeed folder and more. Farmer's Market benefits were also issued during this event.

In 2025, WIC will launch additions to the food package offering more choices to accommodate those with food allergies and with dietary, religious, or cultural preferences. For example: expanded whole grain options to include quinoa, wild rice, millet, triticale, amaranth, kamut, sorghum, wheat berries, tortillas made with folic acid.

The WIC staff will complete the necessary trainings to begin implementing these changes by July 1, 2025.



Home Visiting

As public health home visitors, we have the honor of touching the lives of families living in Coos County every day. There's nothing better than seeing a family work through challenging situations and come out on the other side, stronger, more capable, and more confident in themselves and secure in their relationships with their children. It's not just the "big wins" but all the smaller bright spots that we look for and celebrate with our families each day. Some families work towards more secure housing, others safe transportation, and others succeed in aligning school and health care systems to meet the needs of their children with special needs. Getting there begins with families taking that small step forward towards their goal, and we're there to support and encourage them along the way. Recognizing and celebrating these small successes is what gives us purpose in this, sometimes very difficult, work.

One of the bright spots of being a home visitor is having the time to build rapport and lasting relationships with the families we serve. This also allows the family to get a better understanding of the positive impact home visiting services has on not only them, but the community we live in. This has led to families getting the opportunity to participate in advisory groups that have a direct impact on the future of home visiting services, in a positive way! In fact, one family in particular is now working with the state to advocate for continued, equitable home visiting services for all.

Our program has had successes in other ways as well, including collaborating with Coos and Jefferson Counties for an Oregon Center for a \$50,000 Nursing Nurse Wellbeing grant, collaborating with CCFoPH and WIC to receive over \$11,000 in grants to support the Safer Homes project, collaborating with Ford Family Foundation and Prevention Services to provide Growing Great Kids trainings to Early/Head Start and Public Health home visitors in Coos and Curry Counties, and our continued collaboration with the Group Connections project. All of these grants provide either direct support to families and/or staff development.

Another bright spot in 2024 was that Laura Philips had the opportunity to be trained as a certified birth doula. This training has broadened her knowledge and abilities to help not only our families but others in the community that want Doula support as well. Plus, she has been able to share her knowledge with the rest of the home visiting team so that we can all offer better support to our pregnant clients.

2025 is just around the corner, and we're looking forward to completing some of our activities that carried over from 2024. We're excited to implement the Great Kids curriculum with families (training that we received in December 2024). We're also looking forward to growing our team and adding another Public Health nurse, or two! No doubt, there will be additional opportunities to support our team, our agency, our community partners, and our community as a whole. We're curious to see what these opportunities look like.

Environmental Health

In 2025 the Environmental Health staff are enthused about upcoming training regarding sanitation that will be offered locally to both operators of public pools and food service businesses. Good training corresponds to better findings during inspections and a healthier community.

Certified Pool Operator (CPO) training is a two day nationally recognized course scheduled to take place in February. CPO training has never been offered on the south coast before. A private contractor has offered to provide the instruction. Partnering with pool operators in Douglas, Curry and Coos County will make the class a success.

There are a number of food service manager certification training classes recognized by the state of Oregon. Environmental Health has a qualified instructor and has offered a SERVSAFE manager certification class twice a year. New in 2025 the SERVSAFE classes will also be offered in Spanish.

2024 Acknowledgements and Trends

The Fair Board enacted a sanitary plan with consultation from Environmental Health staff and other CHW administrative support for managing waste water from food vendors and other visitors.

EH Staff has noticed an increased number of mobile food unit businesses being licensed to operate in Coos County.

The EH staff are responsible for licensing and inspecting Coos County RV Parks. An economic trend is that some RV Parks are changing in use from tourists/travelers to focus on full-time residents. Federal laws relating to drinking water are more stringent at a full-time residential RV Parks. RV Parks that have an independent public water systems have an obligation for testing the water for contaminants.

