



**WASCO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL SESSION
AUGUST 12, 2020**

This meeting was held on Google Hangout Meet
Meeting ID: <https://meet.google.com/joo-mudn-vpm?hs=122>
or call in to [1-502-382-4610](tel:1-502-382-4610) PIN: 321 403 268#

PRESENT: Scott Hege, Chair
Kathy Schwartz, Vice-Chair
Steve Kramer, County Commissioner

STAFF: Kathy Clark, Executive Assistant
Tyler Stone, Administrative Officer

Agenda Item – COVID-19 in Wasco County

Chair Hege opened the session at 9:00 a.m.

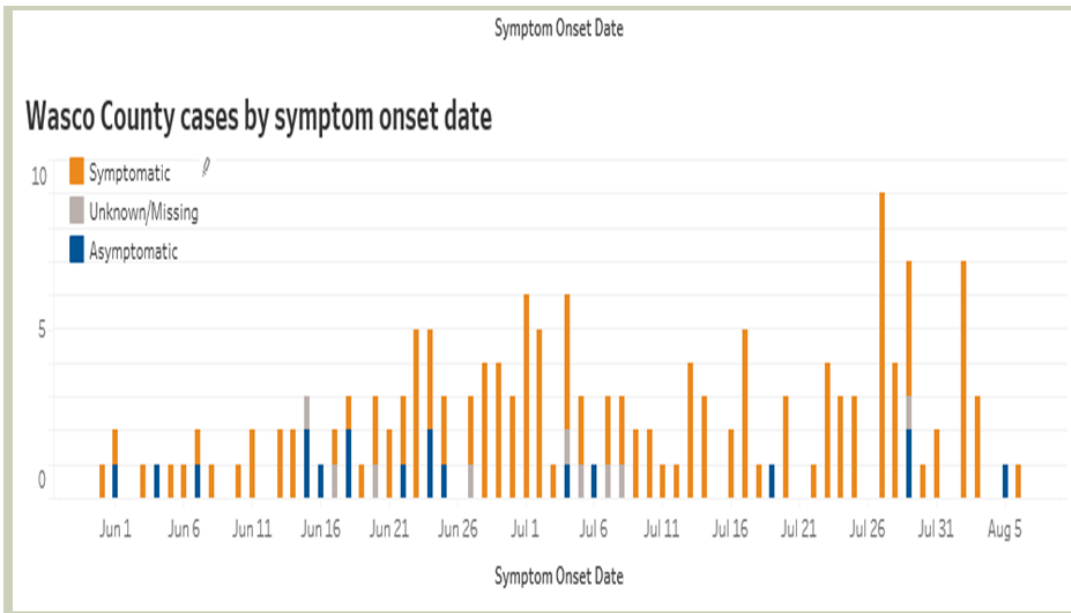
Dr. Mimi McDonell reviewed a power point presentation as follows:

COUNTY DATA CASES TO DATE (AVERAGE PERCENT POSITIVE TEST)		
■ Wasco	195	(9.1%)
■ Sherman	16	(8.3%)
■ Gilliam	4	(0.0%)
■ Hood River	201	(5.9%)
■ Oregon	21,774	(5.4%)

Dr. McDonell explained that the numbers next to each entity represents the total number of cases since we started tracking in March of this year. The percentages in

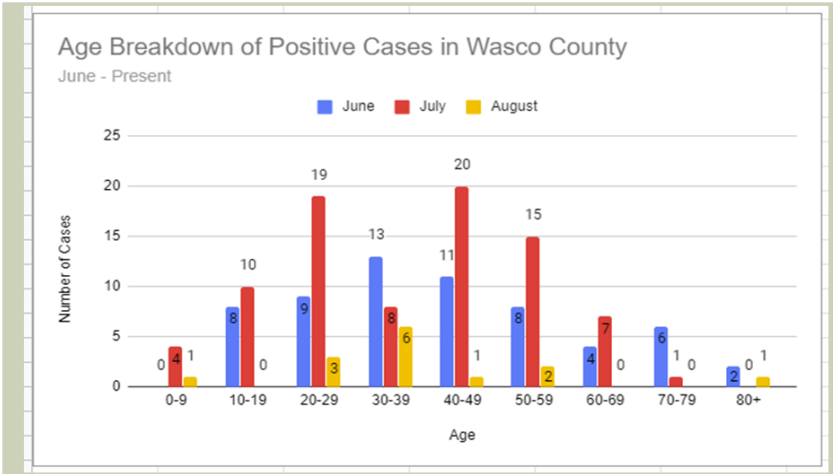
parentheses represent the percentage of positive test results for the past week. She reminded everyone that in-person education is dependent on a percentage under 5% for both an individual county and the state as a whole.

WASCO COUNTY POSITIVE TESTS BY DATE

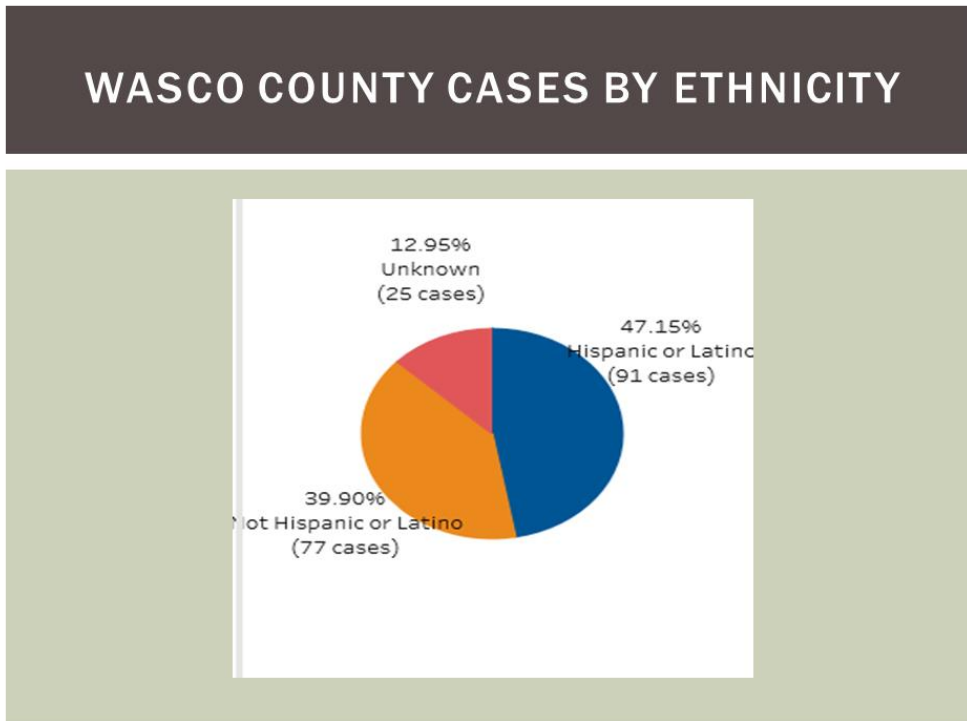


Dr. McDonnell explained that the chart above looks at the timeline of positive cases from the beginning of June through August 5th. She pointed out that we have recently had higher spikes.

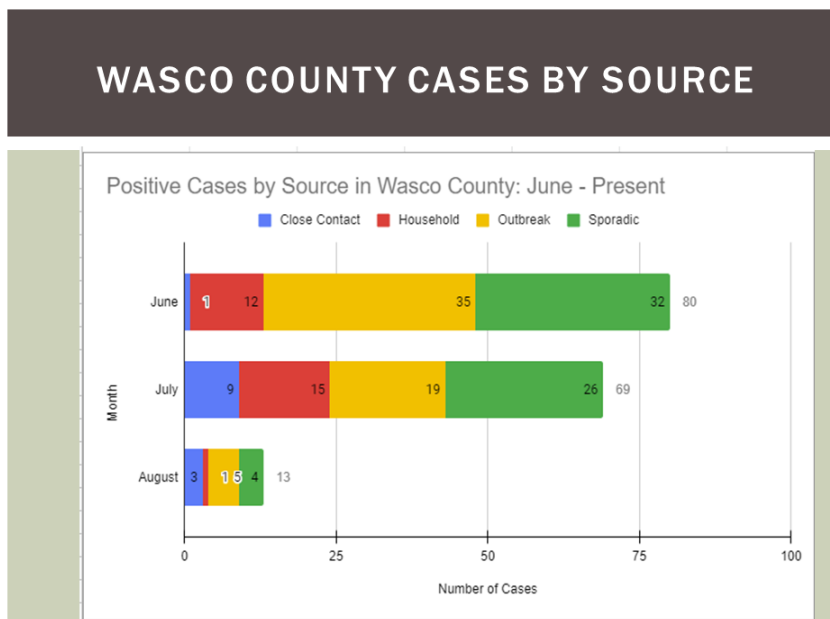
WASCO COUNTY CASES BY AGE



Dr. McDonnell said that one of the things we have talked about is who is getting COVID at any given time in the continuum. The chart above shows each age group within June, July and August. She pointed out the numbers jump for the 20-29 and 40-49 age range in the month of July. She said that it is hard to extrapolate too much from this data as our numbers are comparatively small.



Dr. McDonnell explained that the slide above illustrates the cases by ethnicity. The Lantinx population continues to be over-represented in our county; approximately 20% of the population is Lantinx.



Dr. McDonnell explained that the chart above illustrates the tracking on how the virus is being spread by month. The sporadic cases are those where they have not been able to determine the source of transmission. The outbreak numbers are associated with workplaces which would include residents of long term care facilities were there to be an outbreak there. Some of the outbreak numbers are from people who reside in Wasco County but work in another county. The close contact numbers are cases where the source of transmission is known but is not from a work environment or someone living in the same household.

Dr. McDonnell went on to say that of course we want to slow all areas of transmission but specifically the sporadic group. She noted that while August's numbers seem small it is because we are just in the beginning of the month. In June the rate of sporadic cases in Wasco County was about 40%; in July it was 38%; so far in August, we are at 31%. We are still seeing community spread – people are getting it from sources that we cannot identify.

RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION

- **County Metrics- to be met 3 weeks in a row**
 - Case rate ≤ 10 cases/100,000/week
 - Test positivity $\leq 5\%$ in the preceding 7 days
- **State metric**
 - Test positivity $\leq 5\%$ in the preceding 7 days

Dr. McDonnell reviewed the State guidelines, released a couple of weeks ago, for returning to in-person instruction. New guidance was released yesterday that is an addendum to this. The state is currently at 5.6%.

ODE COUNTY ALLOWANCE



SMALLER POPULATION COUNTIES WITH A POPULATION OF ≤30,000

Baker, Crook, Curry, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Jefferson, Lake, Morrow, Sherman, Tillamook, Union, Wallowa, Wasco, and Wheeler

An allowance for returning to in-person instruction can happen under the following conditions:

- ✓ Schools fully comply with sections 1-3 of the Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance and students cannot be part of any single cohort, or part of multiple cohorts that are >50 people.
- ✓ Total county COVID-19 cases in the last three weeks is ≤30, with less than half of cases (or ≤5 cases) reported in the last week of the three-week period.
- ✓ The Local Public Health Authority indicates that there is **not community spread** in the school catchment area.*
- ✓ The public or private school has an **enrollment of ≤250 total** and no more than 10% of the students live outside the school's catchment area. (Students outside the catchment area include interdistrict and intradistrict transfers and the school may not accept new transfers from outside its catchment area (it must continue to serve all students within its boundaries))

Dr. McDonell explained that ODE and OHA recognize that circumstances in the smaller counties are a little different than the more populous counties. Therefore, they have made allowances for counties with a population below 30,000 as outlined in the chart above. Wasco County falls into this group. When looking at the parameters, they are not going by percentages but actual numbers. This will be more applicable in Sherman and Gilliam counties where the populations are significantly less than in Wasco County. One of the standards that needs to be met is a school population of less than 250. Most of the schools in Wasco County will not be eligible.

CASE RATE PER 100,000 AUGUST 2-AUGUST 8 (PRIOR WEEKS)

■ Wasco	114	(55,59)	
■ Sherman	169	(282,0)	
■ Gilliam	0	(50,50)	
■ Hood River	86	(79,75)	

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Dr. McDonnell reviewed the case rate per 100,000 slide above, noting that the target is less than 30. She added that for the smaller counties, one case significantly impacts their rate.

North Central Public Health District (NCPHD) Interim Executive Director Shellie Campbell said they are continuing services to the community, including home visiting and WIC through telehealth, walk-in clinic and reproductive services. They are using short term funding to hire some new staff; they are currently training and finding space for that expansion. They are moving forward with isolation and quarantine and have a contract with a local hotel to provide that space. They just heard from Oregon Health Authority (OHA) regarding grants for community-based organizations and how they can help local Public Health offices for contact tracing, education, wrap around services, etc. The Health Council is one such community organization. A lot of agreements, conversations and training will be necessary to get it all up and running. If there is a surge, it will provide additional capacity. They are also talking about how to be ready for when vaccines are available so that we can implement locally. It may be some time before vaccines are available but when it happens it could happen quickly and we want to prepare now to be ready to go. They will continue that work with community partners and volunteers.

Vice-Chair Schwartz thanked NCPHD for all the data. She noted that it appears OHA is starting to count the tests differently – as they are done rather than when they come in. Dr. McDonnell commented that the change will cause a hiccup in the data for one week of reporting but will essentially be the same after that.

Vice-Chair Schwartz asked if we are still struggling with the length of time for test results. Dr. McDonnell responded that the bigger companies seem to take longer. Through the state labs, which we use when there are outbreaks, it takes about 2 days. MCMC uses OHSU and that is a 2-3 day turnaround.

Vice-Chair Schwartz asked what the compliance is for quarantine and isolation. Dr. McDonnell replied that for the most part, people are willing to comply.

Vice-Chair Schwartz said that there is data on the State website related to zip codes. Dr. McDonnell stated that the zip code related data has some caveats – when there is a very small number of people in a particular zip code, they do not release the information.

Vice-Chair Schwartz expressed concern around the new guidelines for smaller counties opening in-person education. She observed that small children have limited capacity to observe social distancing and wear masks. Dr. McDonnell responded that currently we don't meet the criteria for in-person instruction. She stated that she is very aware of the cost, especially for K-3rd grade, of being taught

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through distance learning – it is very difficult. The school districts are being very conscientious about keeping children and staff safe. There may be places where in-person instruction can move forward, but we do not meet the criteria.

Commissioner Kramer asked how many of the 195 Wasco County cases are recovered. Dr. McDonell acknowledged that the 195 cases is the number of cases since we began tracking in March, we do not remove the recovered patients from the total. The percentage of positives is what changes from week to week and is the number to track to understand how we are doing. She said that she would add the number of recovered cases in next week's report to give people a sense of how many active cases there are. She said for the week of August 2nd we had 30 new cases – the biggest week so far. Determining how many people are contagious at any given time is a number that is hard to pin down. Sometimes we know early on and sometimes we don't know until 10 days into the illness.

Chair Hege asked if the total number as a metric is really used for anything. Dr. McDonell responded . She said that it is not; they use the rate percentages. Chair Hege asked if the way to drive the percentages down would be to do more testing. He asked if Hood River does more testing than we do. Dr. McDonell said that in Oregon, we look at the total number of tests. Early on when One Community Health was doing more testing, the percentage would have been impacted. For the past several weeks, we are all using the same criteria as to who gets tested which helps with the accuracy and usefulness of the data.

Chair Hege asked if the delay in receiving the test result changes where it shows up on the graph. Dr. McDonell replied that the data points on the graph are from symptom onset rather than when the test results are received. There are several ways to do it but as long as you are consistent, it does not change the actual number – it just shifts it forward or back in time.

Chair Hege noted that the quarantine space is expensive and asked if we are using it and to what extent. Ms. Campbell said that we have 11 rooms reserved and we are using them – we have had anywhere from 1 to 9 in use at any given time. Those costs will be reimbursed through FEMA.

Marolyn Wilks said that she is very grateful to all for all the good work – especially Public Health. She asked what is the outreach to the over-represented Latinx community and how can we lessen those numbers.

Ms. Campbell said that from the beginning we knew that the Latinx community would increase with the seasonal workers coming into the county. We worked closely with partners and orchardists on how to message to that community. A lot of work went into education for the workers and the orchardists. We also worked to

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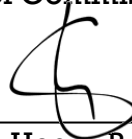
make sure they were equipped to work safely and respond to any positive cases. A lot of very culturally specific, language-appropriate messaging was developed. We continue to message to the year-round Latinx population. Everything that is on the website is available in Spanish.

Dr. McDonell added that we have other over-represented populations that we try to discover why they are over-represented and then work to alleviate it. Across the country, if you look at where people work and what they do, it is a lot of people in the service industries where they cannot work from home. Inherently, the work place is a higher risk. We want do what we can to make those workplaces safe but also remind people that the workplace is not the only place where they can contract this virus. We do not have all the answers but are continuing to try.

Commissioner Kramer asked that the Board's thanks be passed along to staff at NCPHD. Chair Hege concurred, saying it is great to get this information out.

Chair Hege closed the session at 9:44 a.m.

Wasco County
Board of Commissioners



Scott C. Hege, Board Chair



Kathleen B. Schwartz, Vice-Chair



Steven D. Kramer, County Commissioner