



NEWS *from* Clatsop County

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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PUBLIC HEALTH OFFERS COVID TESTING BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

In response to the new surge in coronavirus infections, demand for COVID-19 testing is outstripping the capacity of local health providers.

As a result, the Clatsop County Public Health Department will provide testing to the public by *appointment only* beginning Aug. 18.

The change is necessary to allow Public Health to focus its resources on case investigation, including contact tracing, outbreak management and vaccination, which are the department's highest priorities.

Public Health will end its testing service at its Astoria office, as well as the drive-thru testing at the Household Hazardous Waste facility, and will instead offer appointment-only tests Wednesdays and Fridays in Seaside and Astoria beginning Aug. 18.

For information on scheduling an appointment, call (503) 325-8500.

Increased demand for testing across Oregon and nationwide has impacted the supply chain for specific resources. As a result, slots for testing from Public Health may not be available for everyone who seeks an appointment.

"We are approaching a situation where certain types of testing may be prioritized to high-risk exposures and the most vulnerable," Public Health Director Margo Lalich said.

Local health providers report that some residents, including many with no COVID-19 symptoms, are repeatedly coming in for tests, or are seeking testing at urgent care clinics or emergency rooms, diverting staff and resources from other duties and potentially putting themselves at risk for infection.

"Testing was never intended to replace vaccination," Lalich said.

Public health continues to remind people that vaccination remains the most effective strategy to reduce severity of illness when infected, while masking is the most effective barrier to minimize transmission between people when indoors or unable to socially distance.

Vaccines are available from Public Health and a variety of other providers. Go to www.co.clatsop.or.us for more information.

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