

The Honorable Kate Brown
Office of the Governor
900 Court Street NE, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Dear Governor Brown,

As a bio-chemist and ex-researcher, I felt compelled to write this letter after attending your Facebook event regarding the coronavirus.

The citizenry needs to believe the state will respond in a more rapid and flexible manner than the muddled results from federal authorities.

My considered suggestions to the Oregon state government are the following:

- **Increase access to testing:** As of March 4th 2020, University of Washington has announced a viable testing kit
 - <https://www.washington.edu/coronavirus/2020/03/06/presumptive-positive-covid-19-test-staff-member-in-roosevelt-commons-east/>

Please let the populace know if the OHA is working with OHSU or other local university's biochemistry or medical departments to create testing kits for Oregon. On March 5th, 2020, many Oregon administrators admitted that the state is under-prepared for an outbreak. Currently Oregon only has 1500 kits and it is clear that the faulty administration working with the CDC is minimizing the problem (see next point) to justify low supplies and thus negating the need for more testing kits. I suggest that instead of re-inventing the wheel, it might be faster to get a similar kit in place for Oregon.

- **Share current information to prevent communal spread:** On March 3rd, a genomic epidemiological study conducted in Seattle by Dr. Bedford provided evidence toward observed and hypothesized communal spread at an average rate of two mutations per month. This study needs to be used in determining required testing for adequate containment of the virus.
 - <https://bedford.io/blog/ncov-cryptic-transmission/>
 - <http://virological.org/t/phylogenetic-analysis-129-genomes-24-feb-2020/356>
- **Clarify the federal government's inadequate responses about careless spreading:** President Trump has declared that WHO's declaration of 3.4 % death rate is a 'hunch'. He believes it is below 1% and insists on calling the coronavirus the "coronaflu". Both are wrong and minimizes the problem, providing a false sense of security. The State of Oregon needs to make it amply clear that this is incorrect to reduce people's carelessness.
- **Spread the true usefulness about masks:** The surgeon general's recent tweet was confusing and inflammatory. The message that only medical workers need masks to protect themselves but the same doesn't work for 'regular' people is an illogical argument. Oregon needs to clarify exactly why masks are used and why it is not necessary for the public to wear this for regular activity. I've written an article that specifies the size of the virus, and the filtering capability of N95.
(<https://wonkyperspectives.com/coronavirus-covid-19-and-masks-filters/>)

- **Clarify the usefulness of hand sanitizers:** There is zero difference between brand names and non-branded hand sanitizers. The public should be encouraged to purchase any that are available. They can also make their own versions if a clear procedure is established to ensure that the resultant sanitizer has an alcohol content greater than 60 %. I have detailed a protocol at (<https://wonkyperspectives.com/make-your-own-hand-sanitizer-coronavirus-covid-19/>)
- **Share information regarding the emergency declarations:** Two counties have declared emergencies as of March 4th, 2020. However, it is not clear to the public how this step will help or what it would accomplish. It would be a good step to clarify the county and state of Oregon's position to allow for more transparency.
- **Expanding Medical leave:** Governor Brown, you mentioned that Oregon is one of the few states that provides paid medical leave. Unfortunately, it is not enough to cover the CDC recommended 2 weeks (incubation period of virus is 2 to 14 days) quarantine needed to contain the infection. The state needs to mandate companies in providing paid leave for all workers to effectively tackle the issue of people spreading the virus despite showing symptoms, due to lack of wages or insurance.
- **Expand protections for public places:**
 - **Universities and schools:** It is clear that children and teens are not as affected, but are carriers of the virus. Teachers, professors, college students, and staff in these environments are at a greater risk of exposure through communal spread. Oregon's universities should switch to online classes for the rest of winter term, similar to UW's decision (March 6th, 2020).
 - **Yoga, gym, and community studios:** These are hotspots for communal spreads due to physical exertions, sweat and hygienic conditions, and lowering of immune systems of healthy individuals immediately after exercising. Please encourage the state to produce health warnings for these places so people are informed about their risks.
 - **Airports, trains, cruises, ports:** There are a lot of entry points where possible infected individuals are passing through and increasing the level of communal spread. At the very least, airport workers and port workers should be tested. A thermal scanner can be used to identify individuals with higher than average body temperature, who can then be further tested. The scanners can be positioned at the security checkpoints without adding burden and labor to the process.

Please feel free to contact me if you'd like me to clarify anything further on any point.

Sincerely,

Shree C. Aier

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

wonkyperspectives.com

[REDACTED]