

Memorandum

To: House Committee on Health Care, Chair Representative Andrea Salinas

From: Holly Heiberg, Government Relations Director, External Relations Division

Date: February 29, 2020

Subject: COVID-19 briefing: Oregon Health Authority response to questions

1) How many hospital beds are currently available in Oregon?

Response: Oregon has around 6,180 staffed hospital beds. Oregon's hospital capacity monitoring system, HOSCAP, allows health care and emergency preparedness partners to share real-time status on their available hospital beds. The Portland metro area uses HOSCAP to manage patient flow in real time.

2) Please describe the Oregon Health Authority outreach in detail, specifically for non-primary English speakers, rural Oregonians, etc.

Response: As a part of the Incident Management Team (IMT) that the Oregon Health Authority has stood up to respond to COVID-19, a liaison branch is responsible for providing two-way communications with local public health authorities, Tribes, community-based organizations and other partners. Weekly COVID-19 partner conference calls are being scheduled for partners to get the information they need to answer questions from their communities and provide guidance on prevention. In addition, local public health authorities will continue to connect with their community-based and culturally specific organizations to provide the same type of outreach at the local level.

The Oregon Health Authority has provided written communications which are posted to the healthoregon.org/coronavirus website in Spanish, Simplified Chinese and Traditional Chinese. Going forward, communications to the public will be translated to the top five most frequently spoken languages in Oregon, which are Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Vietnamese and Russian. Calls from the general public about COVID-19 are being handled by 211Info, which has access to a 240-language interpreter service. Communications to the public are also being routed through community organizations involved in the Oregon Health Authority Community Partner Outreach Program (CPOP).

3) What is the connection between smoking and COVID-19 fatality rates?

Response: Preliminary information about COVID-19 cases coming from China indicate that men are being more severely impacted than women. One reason for this gender discrepancy may be smoking rates – with approximately half of Chinese men smoking and only about 2% of Chinese women smoking. The complications from COVID-19 in long-term smokers may be higher because their airways and lungs are more vulnerable due to damage from smoking. The World Health Organization states that smoking may increase harm in patients with COVID-2019.

