



Jefferson County

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Central Oregon Public Health Monthly Update

December 27, 2024

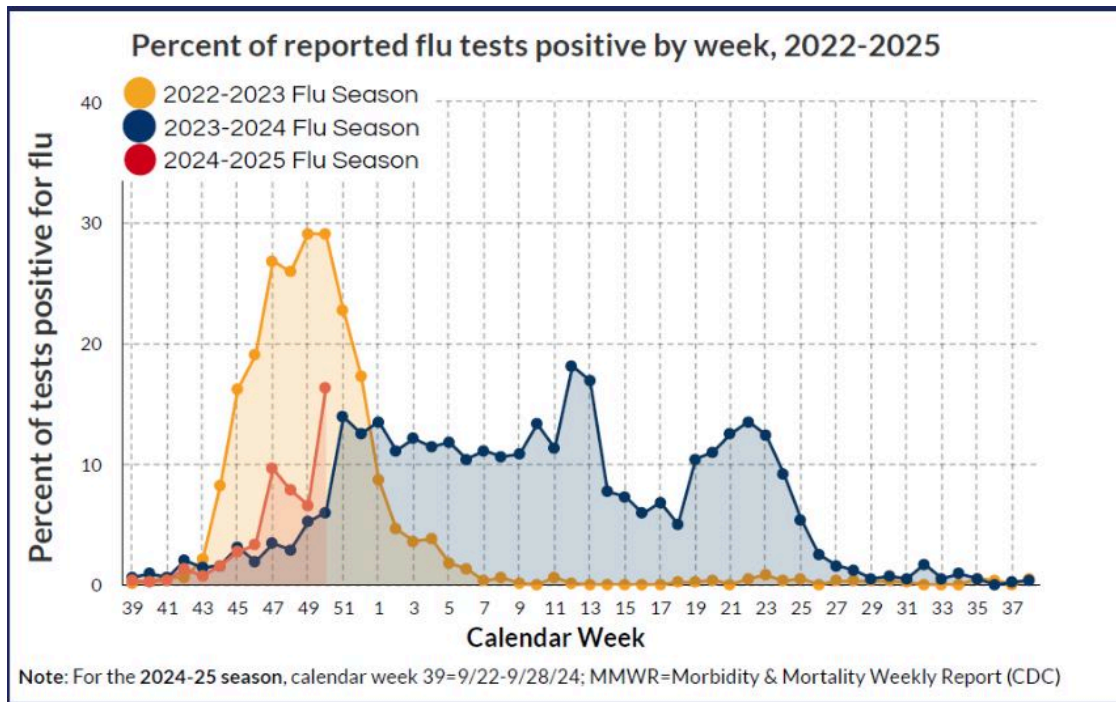
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To receive it in your mailbox click [here](#).

Usted puede encontrar el boletín de este mes en español [aquí!](#)

Respiratory Illness Surveillance Report

Influenza (Flu) Since the beginning of December, flu positivity has been trending [upward across the nation](#) and here in Central Oregon. Indicators from all surveillance systems, including [wastewater testing in Bend](#), [hospitalizations](#), and [the percentage of positive tests in our region](#), show significant increases since the end of November. For the week of December 8-14, 16.3% of flu tests were positive, compared to 6.6% the week prior. Additionally, there was a spike in hospital visits, with 66 individuals visiting emergency rooms for influenza-like illness during this period



Vaccination It is not too late to benefit from flu vaccination. In Central Oregon, as in much of the nation, flu vaccination rates have declined each year since 2020. As of December 11, only [26% of Deschutes County residents, 20% of Crook County residents, and 20% of Jefferson County residents](#) have been vaccinated for the flu. This marks a downward trend from the 2020–21 flu season, when nearly 35% of residents in Central Oregon counties were vaccinated.

COVID-19 [COVID-19 positivity rates](#) remain low but are increasing nationally. From December 8–14, 3.1% of tests were positive. This could signal the potential for a later-season spike compared to previous years.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) [RSV levels](#) remain low in our community compared to previous seasons. Emergency room visits for RSV were reported in fewer than five individuals across Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson counties during the same period.

Avian Influenza A (H5) In Oregon, one human case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 has been reported. To date, human-to-human transmission of influenza A(H5) virus has not been identified in the United States. Three confirmed cases and one probable case of influenza A(H5) were reported to the CDC last week.

- **California:** Two confirmed cases were reported in workers aged ≥ 18 years at a commercial dairy cattle farm in an area where highly pathogenic avian influenza viruses were detected in cows. The individuals experienced mild symptoms and reported them to local health officials. There have now been 34 confirmed cases and one probable case in California.
- **Louisiana:** One confirmed case was reported in an individual aged ≥ 18 years who developed respiratory symptoms at the end of

November. Testing confirmed influenza A(H5) virus. Public health officials identified exposure to backyard poultry prior to illness onset. The patient remains hospitalized. This is the first influenza A(H5) case in Louisiana and the first instance of severe illness from influenza A(H5) infection in the United States.

More information on avian influenza in animals is available from the [Oregon Department of Agriculture](#).

Deschutes County Healthy Schools Annual Report



Deschutes County Healthy Schools released its **2023-2024 Annual Report** this month. The Healthy Schools program launched in the 2021-2022 school year in two high schools, expanded the following year to 10 middle and high schools, and now all 14 secondary schools in the district have an on-site Healthy Schools Public Health Specialist serving as their School Health Coordinator.

The mission of Healthy Schools is to provide public health services directly within schools and school communities using collaborative, systemic, and integrative approaches so that students, families, and school staff in Deschutes County have access to high quality health promoting programs.

The Healthy Schools program was designed and implemented to improve behavioral health outcomes for the whole adolescent population. Several national leaders in child and adolescent health have declared a **[national youth mental health crisis](#)**. Factors contributing to this crisis include: media usage, academic pressure, access to mental health care, alcohol and other drug use, and economic changes.

According to the YouthTruth Survey results of 2023, 50% of middle and high school students in Bend-La Pine Schools reported feeling stressed, anxious, or depressed as a barrier to learning. The rate of mental health issues exceeds the capacity of treatment providers alone and requires partnerships between public health, schools, youth and family, healthcare, and other organizations to address the root causes.

More detailed information can be found in the 2023-2024 Annual Report, linked above. We are eager to talk about this program. Contact us by email (healthyschools@deschutes.org) or find out more information on the [Deschutes County Healthy Schools webpage](#).

Deschutes County Medical Reserve Corps Strengthens Readiness with Emergency Exercise



DCMRC volunteer applies moulage wound to a role player

When disaster strikes, preparation can make all the difference. That's why the Deschutes County Medical Reserve Corps (DCMRC), in partnership with the Red Cross and Oregon Health Authority, recently conducted a full-scale emergency preparedness exercise focused on medical shelter operations.

Why Practice Matters

Emergency preparedness exercises can simulate real-life scenarios, helping volunteers and responders build the skills and confidence needed to act quickly and effectively. For the DCMRC, these exercises are about more than just practice - they're about ensuring volunteers are ready to support the community during crises, such as wildfire evacuations.

"Being prepared means having the experience and teamwork to respond when it counts," explained DCMRC Coordinator Alex Drungil. Exercises like this one give volunteers hands-on training and strengthen the resilience of the entire community.



DCMRC medical volunteer assessing a "shelter guest" and their medical needs.

Inside the Exercise

The recent exercise, supported by the Red Cross, challenged volunteers to support the medical needs of people evacuated during a simulated wildfire. The scenario required them to care for role-playing patients with a

range of needs. Some patients arrived with mock injuries, created using special effects makeup called moulage, while others needed basic first-aid care or emotional support.

Volunteers worked through realistic challenges, like triaging patients, managing stress, and communicating clearly under pressure. Observers and evaluators, which included Oregon Health Authority, were on hand to provide feedback, ensuring every step of the process was a valuable learning opportunity.

Looking Ahead

The exercise was a success as it demonstrated the dedication and capability of DCMRC volunteers. Partnering with the Red Cross added another layer of realism to the training and highlighted the importance of collaboration in disaster response. The DCMRC and Red Cross are looking forward to continued collaboration as we prepare to support the needs of our local community!



Group photo

For more information on the DCMRC, please visit our [website](#).

ServSafe Certified Food Manager Class - Tuesday, February 4, 2025

Get Certified! Join our ServSafe Certified Food Manager Course on Tuesday, February 4, 2025 at the **Deschutes County 911 Service District** on **20355 Poe Sholes Dr. in Bend**. Cost is \$125 for the book, pre-test, full day in-

person class, proctored exam and certification. Call 541-317-3114 to register!

Can't make this one? The next ServSafe Course will be offered in May 2025. Call us to be placed on the interest list.

ServSafe en Español

DCHS will offer ServSafe in Spanish on July 22nd. Call 541-317-3114 for more information.

Health Services hosts numerous classes and special events each month!

For details about these events and any updates please visit our [Health Services Calendar](#).

Public Health Resources:

- Central Oregon public health web resources:
 - [Crook County](#)
 - [Deschutes County](#)
 - [Jefferson County](#)

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