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President Joe Biden, Gov. Kate Brown Issue Proclamations in Honor of Health Center Week
Oregon's 34 community health centers have served as vital state and federal partners in providing a more equitable comprehensive vaccination program

Portland, OR – The Oregon Primary Care Association (OPCA) is proud to share that in honor of National Health Center Week, President Joe Biden has issued a [Proclamation on National Health Center Week 2021](#), and Gov. Kate Brown has declared Aug. 8-14, 2021, as [Health Center Week in Oregon](#).

This year, Oregon's 34 community health centers (CHCs), including two Look-Alikes, have served as vital state and federal partners in providing a more equitable comprehensive vaccination program by helping remove barriers for populations throughout Oregon that have been most severely impacted by COVID-19.

"Our Nation's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is stronger because of our health centers, and the tireless, dedicated health center employees who continue to deliver critical services such as COVID-19 testing, treatment, and prevention services on the front lines," reads the President's proclamation. "As we ramped up the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines over the past several months, health centers, through the Health Center COVID-19 Vaccine Program, have vaccinated and built vaccine confidence in millions of Americans from hard-hit and high-risk communities. Two-thirds of individuals vaccinated at health centers so far identify as racial and ethnic minorities. Health centers have also offered greater flexibility during the pandemic by expanding telehealth services to those in need."

Oregon health centers mobilized as soon as vaccines were available, and have hosted 15 pop-up vaccine clinics, 20 mobile events, and 13 school-based events between January and July, among other vaccine programs offered at CHCs across the state. Oregon's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), also known as community health centers, deliver integrated medical, dental, and behavioral health services to communities that might not otherwise be able to see a provider at over 270 locations statewide.

"Health centers are trusted sources of quality community-based care and are uniquely positioned to assist in vaccinating vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities across the state, including people experiencing homelessness and poverty, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), agricultural and migrant farm workers, and people living in rural and frontier communities," said Joan Watson-Patko, OPCA's executive director. "Oregon's community health centers have been critical in ensuring greater access and equity in testing and vaccination to the communities most impacted by COVID-19."

As of July 2021, Oregon's health centers saw COVID-19 positivity rates for racial and ethnic minorities in Oregon at three times the state average of 5%. Health centers in Oregon are vaccinating people of color at similar or higher rates than their shares of the total population.

As of early August, [One Community Health \(OCH\)](#), a CHC in Hood River and The Dalles, has administered more than 14,000 vaccines. "Of the vaccines administered, over 75% have been given to people who are typically underserved by health care institutions, including those who identify as BIPOC, LGBTQ+, or below 200% of the federal poverty line. Our team has made over 180,000 phone calls alone this year to reach this segment of our community along with in-person outreach and events," said Max Janasik, OCH chief executive officer.

In March, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) started a pilot program with One Community Health that allowed certain local health clinics to vaccinate patients they determined to be in the greatest danger of getting COVID-19. "When we received the green light to do that, our community health workers went out

into the community, including over 50 community events, even door-to-door outreach, to reach our vulnerable populations, farm workers, Native Americans and houseless population, all of whom are more likely to test positive,” stated Gladys Rivera, OCH Preventative Health Manager.

Gov. Brown toured the community health center’s vaccination efforts in Hood River in June, saying “the efforts of One Community Health to increase vaccination rates, while prioritizing the health of our most vulnerable populations and Black, Indigenous, Latino, Latina, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Tribal communities, are extraordinary; their efforts truly show what a community can do when we work together.”

In May, Gov. Brown joined Second Gentleman Douglas Emhoff and U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio in Eugene for a tour of [White Bird Clinic](#)’s community vaccination site in Eugene. The visit highlighted the importance of equitable vaccine distribution and showcased a CHC using American Rescue Plan dollars to reach and vaccinate underserved populations.

“It’s critical that we meet people where they are in our communities to provide equitable access to vaccines,” said Gov. Brown during the visit. “The White Bird community vaccination site, and their soon-to-be-deployed mobile vaccination unit, are strong examples of how we can work collaboratively and creatively to reach traditionally underserved communities.”

Chris Hecht, executive coordinator at White Bird Clinic and a member of OPCA’s Board of Directors, said as of August, White Bird Clinic has vaccinated 10,500 people, approximately 40% of whom identify as non-white.

These are just two examples of community health centers that have stepped up in innovative ways to meet the needs of their communities during the global pandemic.

The governor’s proclamation was requested by OPCA as part of [National Health Center Week](#), an annual national celebration that helps raise awareness about the mission and accomplishments of America’s health centers over the past five decades.

Oregon CHCs are planning activities and events during the week and clinic staff celebrations. [See Oregon events here](#). This year, OPCA will be featuring origin stories from members during NHCW on [OPCA’s blog](#) and on social media to honor how CHCs were born out of the civil rights movement.

#NHCW2021 #NHCW21 #ValueCHCs #OregonCHCs #HealthEquity

About Oregon’s CHCs

Oregon’s community health centers deliver integrated medical, dental, and behavioral health services at over 270 locations to communities made vulnerable across the state. Over 466,000 Oregonians receive their care at a community health center, including one in four people on the Oregon Health Plan. Over 73% of patients live below the poverty line, and 94% live at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Over 75% of community health centers have clinic sites serving rural communities, 30% of Oregon’s community health centers are federally recognized as Health Care for the Homeless locations, and 33% are designated as Migrant Health Centers. [Find out more about Oregon’s CHCs here](#).

About OPCA

OPCA is a non-profit membership association of Oregon’s 34 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), including two FQHC Look-Alikes. FQHCs are also known as community health centers (CHCs). The organization’s mission is to lead the transformation of primary care to achieve health equity for all. OPCA believes all people, in Oregon and beyond, should have the chance to lead their healthiest lives and have access to equitable health care. Oregon Primary Care Association supports a network of community health centers that deliver exceptional health care to people in urban, rural and frontier communities who may otherwise not have access to services. By helping health centers apply innovative approaches to health care delivery and system challenges, OPCA is transforming primary care in Oregon and beyond. Follow us on Twitter [@OregonPCA](#) or on [Facebook](#)

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