

Hood River County Public Health Department

1109 June Street, Hood River OR 97031

Office: 541-386-1115, Fax: 541-386-9181

Policy for Personal Health Information Release

An investigation of every positive report is completed and ALL those who are considered at risk per CDC and OHA guidelines at the time of the report are contacted. Please recognize that the guidance changes as new data is accumulated. Identification of the case as an adult or a child is the only Public Health Information (PHI) that will be released under most circumstances.

In the course of our work in public health, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and local public health authorities are entrusted with sensitive health information. Protecting this information is required by law except in very special circumstances. It promotes our ability to conduct effective public health investigations, protect the public's health and maintain the confidence and cooperation of individuals participating in public health investigations. Under Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 433.008(1), any information obtained by OHA or a local public health administrator in the course of an investigation of a reportable disease or disease outbreak is confidential. Such information is not subject to disclosure under the public records law. OHA may, in limited circumstances, disclose reportable disease or disease outbreak information to state, local or federal agencies authorized to receive the information under state law or federal law, but OHA and local public health administrators may only release the *minimum amount of information necessary to carry out the purpose of the release*, ORS 433.008(2)(a) and (4).

Examples of PHI may be released under these special circumstances:

1. Occupational exposure, we will release site data only if unable to reach direct contacts.
2. Release of age in 10 year deciles for deaths.
3. A case in a congregate or high risk setting such as jail, long-term care facility, or school.
4. If we have difficulty contacting exposure patients and the public is at risk.
5. If otherwise necessary due to a direct impact to public health and safety.

The most important information for people to share is that **if you don't feel well, no matter the symptoms, you should be at home**. Don't let down your guard, this virus is circulating in the community; every person that you come into contact with could be a carrier. Remember some people are asymptomatic, and never show symptoms though they are able to spread the virus. It is VITALLY important that everyone separate themselves from work and public begin home isolation AS SOON AS SYMPTOMS APPEAR. Those symptoms may include but are not limited to: stuffy or runny nose, diarrhea, sneezing, body aches, loss of appetite, loss of taste or smell, and coughing or fever.