



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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May 27, 2021

Honorable Governor Kate Brown
Office of the Governor
c/o Jennifer Andrew
900 Court St. NE S-254
Salem, OR 97301
jennifer.j.andrew@oregon.gov

RE: Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Mandates for Private Businesses and Churches to Verify Vaccination Status for Customers

Dear Governor Brown,

We, the Yamhill County Board of Commissioners, oppose the recent mandates and guidance issued by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health (Oregon OSHA) on private businesses and churches to verify the vaccination status of individuals prior to allowing a person to frequent that business or church without a mask or other face covering. These new mandates and guidance are misguided and place unfair and undue responsibilities on local businesses and churches, and their employees and leaders.

To comply with the OHA and Oregon OSHA mandates, local businesses and churches will be required to train their employees to examine and determine the authenticity of medical records. In addition, these employees will need to be trained to interpret these medical records for the purpose of determining if an individual is "fully vaccinated" based on different protocols for the different vaccines being administered in the community. If an employee makes a mistake or miscalculates a "fully vaccinated" date, the business or church will be looking at fines or other administrative action from Oregon OSHA. The only other option is for a business or church to simply require all employees, and others, to continue to wear masks, socially distance, and take like actions, which disregards the recent advice and guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

This requirement, for businesses and churches to independently verify vaccination status, does not appear to be coming from either the White House or the CDC. As far as we are aware, no Federal agency or entity is requiring proof of vaccination (vaccine passports) or recommending that local businesses and churches implement a vaccine passport checking system. We do not understand, nor believe there is a reason for, Oregon implementing such a system at odds with the Federal, scientifically backed, guidance that has been issued.

As a practical matter, requiring businesses and churches, and the employees of those businesses and churches, to verify a person's vaccine status is only going to lead to conflict between employees and customers. As Yamhill County's restaurants, venues, churches, and other businesses have been devastated by shutdowns, restrictions, and limitations on their ability to provide service and function for over a year, the last thing any of these businesses and churches need is yet another, unsupported by science, mandate from the State of Oregon that is only going to lead to conflict as these businesses and churches and their employees begin the long and arduous task of attempting to rebuild what they have lost.

Vaccines are readily accessible to any resident of Yamhill County who wants to receive one without an appointment. This is the time to be easing restrictions, not creating new mandates in the guise of easing restrictions.

Respectfully,

Mary Starrett
Chair

Lindsay Berschauer
Vice-Chair

Casey Kulla
Commissioner