

Western Oregon University + Polk County Covid-19 Project: Placing Public Health Students at the Intersection of Science and Practice

OPHA Panel Presentation
10/11/2021

Maddie Dirren BS, Daniel Dowhower Ph.D., MPH, Jenny Leon-Perez BS, Megan Patton-López Ph.D., RDN, Jacqui Umstead BSN, Kristty Zamora-Polanco MPH, & Emily Vala-Haynes Ph.D., MPH

Panel Introductions



Maddie Dirren, BS
Co-Project Coordinator
Western Oregon University



Kristty Zamora- Polanco, MPH
Epidemiologist
Polk County Public Health



Daniel Dowhower, Ph.D., MPH
Assistant Professor
Western Oregon University

Overview of Presentation

- Introduction to the WOU + Polk County Covid-19 Project
- Overview of the project's strategies and outcomes to date
- Discussion on workforce needs of a local public health and the role of the project to support Covid-19 response.
- Review of student satisfaction and learning outcomes associated with participation in the WOU + Polk County Covid-19 Project

Western Oregon University Community Health + Polk County COVID-19 Project

Our Team



University-Community Collaboration



Helping at the WOU Move In Days event.



With Kristty Zamora-Polanco, Polk County Health Services & WOU alumna

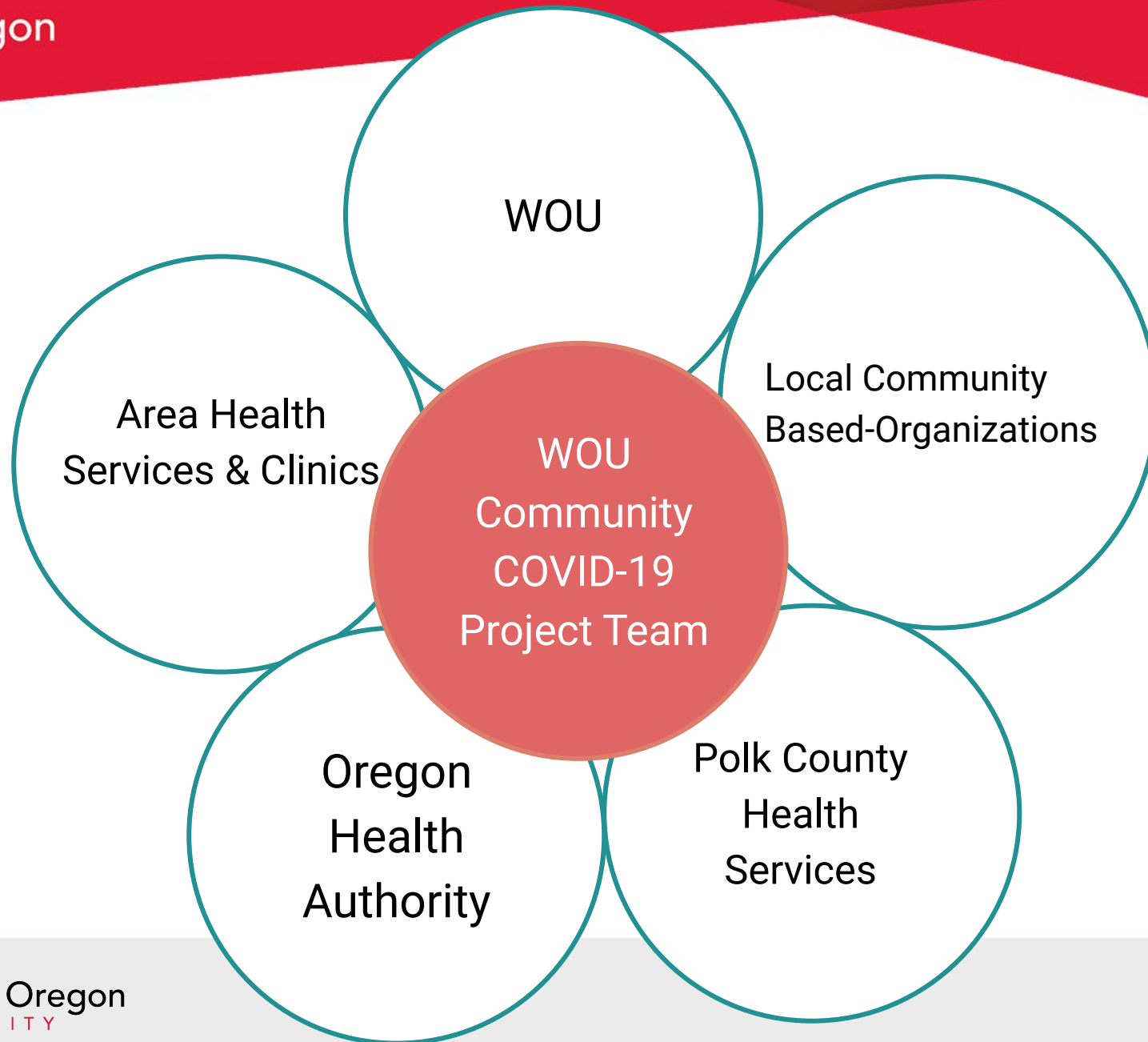


Volunteering at a Polk County testing event.

Our Goal

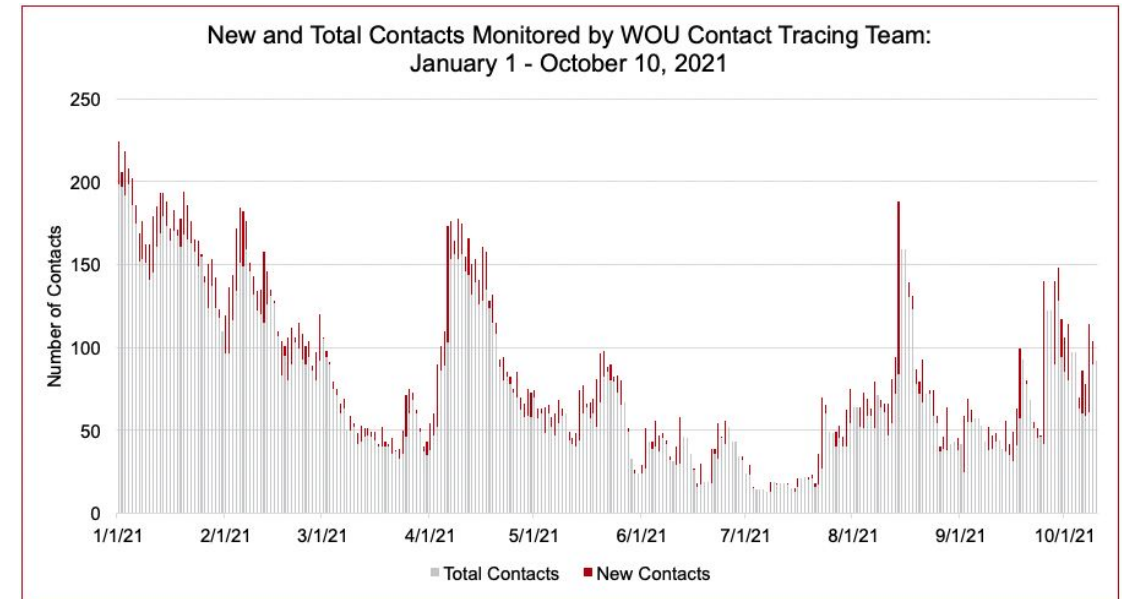
Provide coordinated communication and community engagement efforts that ensure vulnerable populations have access to accurate and timely information to protect their health and safety.





Contact Tracing - By the Numbers

- **9** current contact tracers (29 since July 2020)
- **4** bilingual contact tracers
- **2** languages spoken (Spanish and English)
- **65** hours of contact support per week
- **5,682** individuals have been contact traced since September 1, 2020



Education & Outreach Primary Audiences



Older Adults



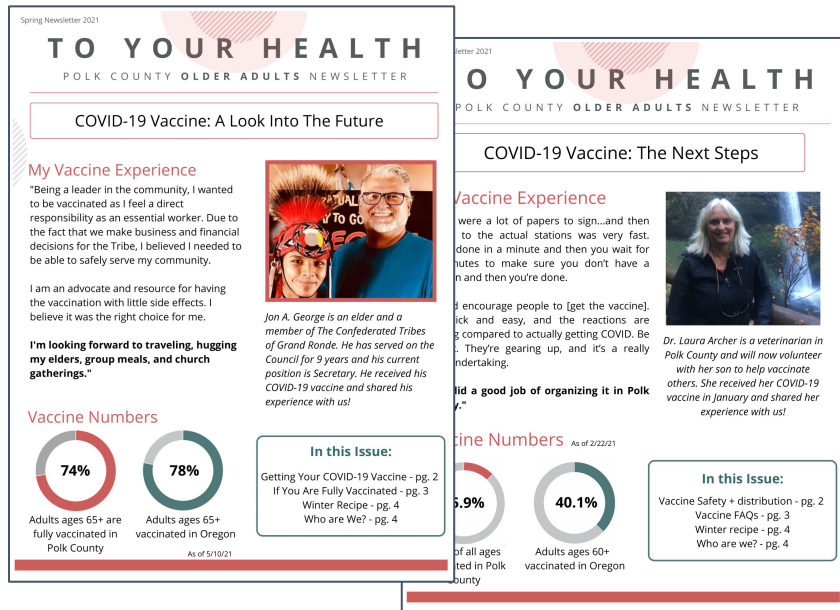
Latinx Families



WOU Campus

Our Outreach Work

Older Adults



Spring Newsletter 2021

TO YOUR HEALTH

POLK COUNTY OLDER ADULTS NEWSLETTER

COVID-19 Vaccine: A Look Into The Future

My Vaccine Experience

"Being a leader in the community, I wanted to be vaccinated as I feel a direct responsibility as an essential worker. Due to the fact that we make business and financial decisions for the Tribe, I believed I needed to be able to safely serve my community.

I am an advocate and resource for having the vaccination with little side effects. I believe it was the right choice for me.

I'm looking forward to traveling, hugging my elders, group meals, and church gatherings."

Vaccine Numbers

74% Adults ages 65+ are fully vaccinated in Polk County

78% Adults ages 65+ vaccinated in Oregon

In this Issue:

- Getting Your COVID-19 Vaccine - pg. 2
- If You Are Fully Vaccinated - pg. 3
- Winter Recipe - pg. 4
- Who are We? - pg. 4

Letter 2021

TO YOUR HEALTH

POLK COUNTY OLDER ADULTS NEWSLETTER

COVID-19 Vaccine: The Next Steps

Vaccine Experience

were a lot of papers to sign...and then to the actual stations was very fast. done in a minute and then you wait for futes to make sure you don't have a n and then you're done.

I encourage people to [get the vaccine]. ick and easy, and the reactions are compared to actually getting COVID. Be . They're gearing up, and it's a really ndertaking.

Did a good job of organizing it in Polk

Vaccine Numbers

5.9% of all ages ted in Polk buntly

40.1% Adults ages 60+ vaccinated in Oregon

In this Issue:

- Vaccine Safety + distribution - pg. 2
- Vaccine FAQs - pg. 3
- Winter recipe - pg. 4
- Who are we? - pg. 4

12 Materials, 3,000+ newsletters,
10 community partners

Latinx Families



VOLUME 6 • 2021

JUNTOS EN SALUD

TOGETHER IN HEALTH

Boletín informativo para Familias del Condado de Polk
Polk County Family Newsletter

TAKE A PEEK!

- HELLO FAMILIES! 1
- ¡SALUD MENTAL! 2
- COVID-19 3
- COMIENDO JUNTOS/EATING TOGETHER 4
- ¡GET MOVING/PROTEJAMOS! 5
- RECURSOS 6

¡HOLA FAMILIAS!

Después de un tiempo largo y difícil, las escuelas planean reabrir este otoño y sabemos que es importante asegurar la salud de los estudiantes. Teniendo esto en cuenta, es esencial considerar la importancia de la vacunación y el uso de cubiertas faciales.

After a long and difficult time, schools plan to reopen this fall, and we know it is important to ensure students' health. With this in mind, it is essential to consider the importance of vaccination and the use of face coverings.

STRONGER TOGETHER

"Hay soluciones sencillas a nuestro alcance. Tenemos que luchar juntos contra el Covid-19, y sin dejar a nadie atrás. Tomé la decisión informada de recibir la vacuna porque quiero hacer mi parte. No solamente para mí sino para mis seres queridos."

"There are simple solutions within our reach. We have to work together against Covid-19, without leaving anyone behind. I made the informed decision to receive the vaccine because I wanted to do my part. Not just for myself, but for those I care about most."

2021 GRAD SPOTLIGHT

This spring, several members of our team are graduating. Below they share a message with our readers.

- Sonia**: "If a friend or I am stressed, I always say just take it day by day."
- Gaby**: "Por cada gota de dulzura que alguien da, hay una gota de amargura en el mundo."
- Karissa**: "It is okay to be afraid of your future. College has helped guide me in the right direction."
- Mariana**: "Aprovecha cada oportunidad que se te presente y no dejes que el miedo te impida crecer."

VOLUME 4 • MARCH 2021

JUNTOS EN SALUD

TOGETHER IN HEALTH

Boletín informativo para Familias del Condado de Polk
Polk County Family Newsletter

TAKE A PEEK!

- HELLO FAMILIES! 1
- COVID-19 INFO 2
- COMIENDO JUNTOS/EAT TOGETHER 3
- ¡PONGANSE EN MOVIMIENTO/GET MOVING! 4

¡HOLA FAMILIAS!

Les queremos agradecer por todo lo que han hecho para mantener a nuestra comunidad segura durante esta pandemia. Recuerde que estamos haciendo esto para mantener seguros a nuestros seres queridos. A pesar de que se está distribuyendo la vacuna del COVID-19, es importante seguir usando nuestras mascarillas y mantener una distancia de 6 pies entre sí.


We want to thank you for all you have done to keep the community safe during this pandemic. Remember, we are doing this to keep our loved ones safe. Even though the COVID-19 vaccine is being distributed, it is still important to keep wearing our facial coverings and maintain 6 feet of distance from one another.

27 Materials, 2,750+ newsletters,
20 community partners


Our Outreach Work Continued

WOU Campus


College Students are eligible for the COVID-19 Vaccine- NOW!




VACCINES ARE SAFE AND EFFECTIVE
Vaccines have undergone rigorous safety testing. These vaccines met the FDA's scientific standards for safety. Thousands participated in vaccine trials.



VACCINES PROVIDE EXTRA PROTECTION
Getting vaccinated protects you, your friends, people from your hall, and the entire student body.



A CHANGE TO RETURN TO NORM
You are one step closer being able to enjoy activities that stopped during the pandemic.



I got my COVID-19 vaccine!
Have you?

Everyone 16 and older is eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine NOW!

Data Briefs

WOU Community Health + Polk County COVID-19 Project
Data Brief
November 2nd, 2020

Cumulative Case Numbers: Oregon: 44,923 • Polk: 690 • Marion: 29th (Last Week: 209)

WOU Community Health + Polk County COVID-19 Project
Data Brief
February 8, 2021

Cumulative Case Numbers: Oregon: 147,122 • Polk: 2,520 • Marion: 11th (Last Week: 96)

WOU Community Health + Polk County COVID-19 Project
Data Brief
May 3, 2021

Cumulative Case Numbers: Oregon: 186,344 • Polk: 3,612 • Marion: 21,339 (Last Week: 70)

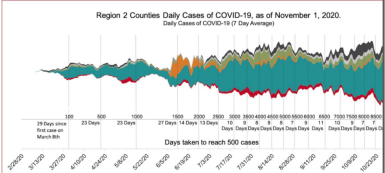
35 Materials,
5 community partners

WOU Community Health + Polk County COVID-19 Project
Data Brief
November 2nd, 2020

Cumulative Case Numbers: Oregon: 44,923 • Polk: 690 • Marion: 29th (Last Week: 209)

County Rankings of Incidence in the Last Week
Polk: 23rd
Marion: 29th

Region 2 Counties Daily Cases of COVID-19, as of November 1, 2020. Daily Cases of COVID-19 (7 Day Average)



Individuals Currently Being Traced by Contact Tracing Team: 94
(Last Week: 209)

Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19 Cases (right):

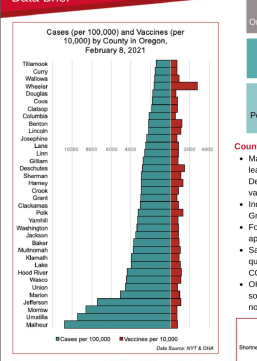
- Nearly 40% of people with COVID-19 in Oregon never experience any symptoms. Among those who do, cough is the most common symptom, followed by headache, aches, and loss of smell.
- A recent study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* estimated that at least 50% of new COVID-19 cases originate from exposure to asymptomatic individuals (people who were infected but never felt sick).

WOU Community Health + Polk County COVID-19 Project
Data Brief
February 8, 2021

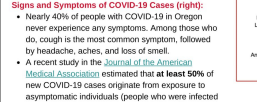
Cumulative Case Numbers: Oregon: 147,122 • Polk: 2,520 • Marion: 11th (Last Week: 96)

County Rankings of Incidence in the Last Week
Polk: 10th (was 13th) • Marion: 11th (was 10th)

Cases (per 100,000) and Vaccines (per 10,000) by County in Oregon, February 8, 2021



COVID-19 Cases by Age Group in Polk County, Oregon
Age of Case • 0-19 • 20-39 • 40-59 • 60-79 • 80+



Polk County Main Takeaways:

- The 20-39 age group has led with the majority of cases through most of this year.
- Case numbers in the 80+ age group have stayed consistently low.
- On April 20th, Polk County returned to the Extreme Risk Category.

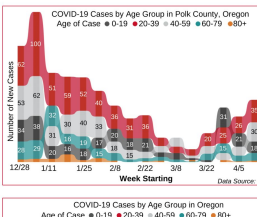
February, 2021

WOU Community Health + Polk County COVID-19 Project
Data Brief
May 3, 2021

Cumulative Case Numbers: Oregon: 186,344 • Polk: 3,612 • Marion: 21,339 (Last Week: 70)

County Rankings of Incidence in the Last Week
Polk: 18th (was 16th)
Marion: 8th (was 6th)

COVID-19 Cases by Age Group in Polk County, Oregon
Age of Case • 0-19 • 20-39 • 40-59 • 60-79 • 80+



Polk County Main Takeaways:

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Interpreting ribbon graphs

- Ribbon graphs show the age distribution of COVID-19 cases over time.
- Different age groups are displayed in different colors.
- The age group with the largest number of cases is shown at the top of the graph during each week.

May, 2021

Undergraduate Student Development

Public Health Skills



- Data visualization
- Health Communication
 - Diverse & bilingual audiences

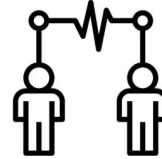


- Health Literacy
- Program Planning & Implementation



- Program Evaluation

Soft Skills



- Communication
- Flexibility
- Leadership



- Public speaking
- Resourcefulness
- Team work



- Time management
- Technology
 - Canva, Excel

The Local Public Health Authority perspective

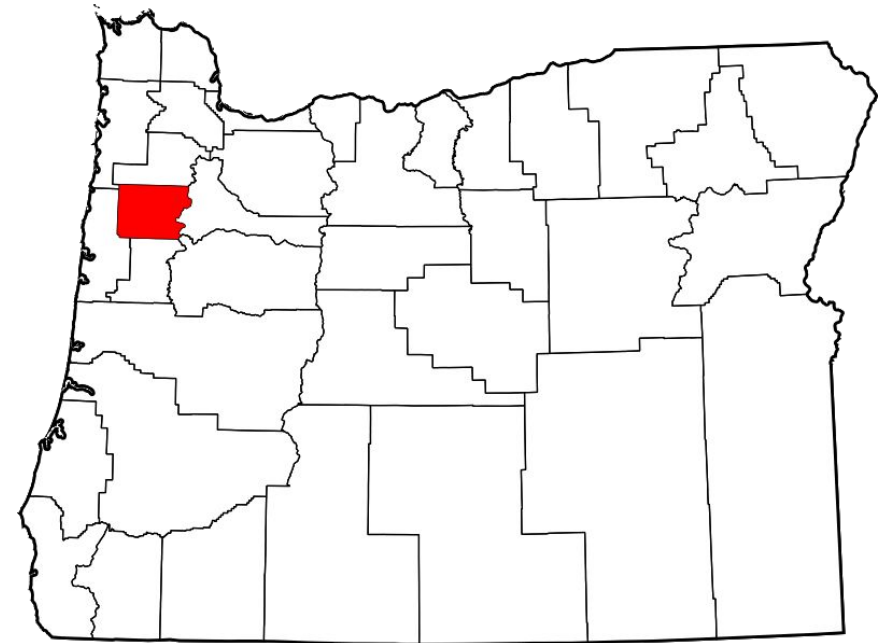
Overview of Presentation

- Polk County Public Health Overview
- COVID-19 Response
- Collective Impact
- Workforce Development

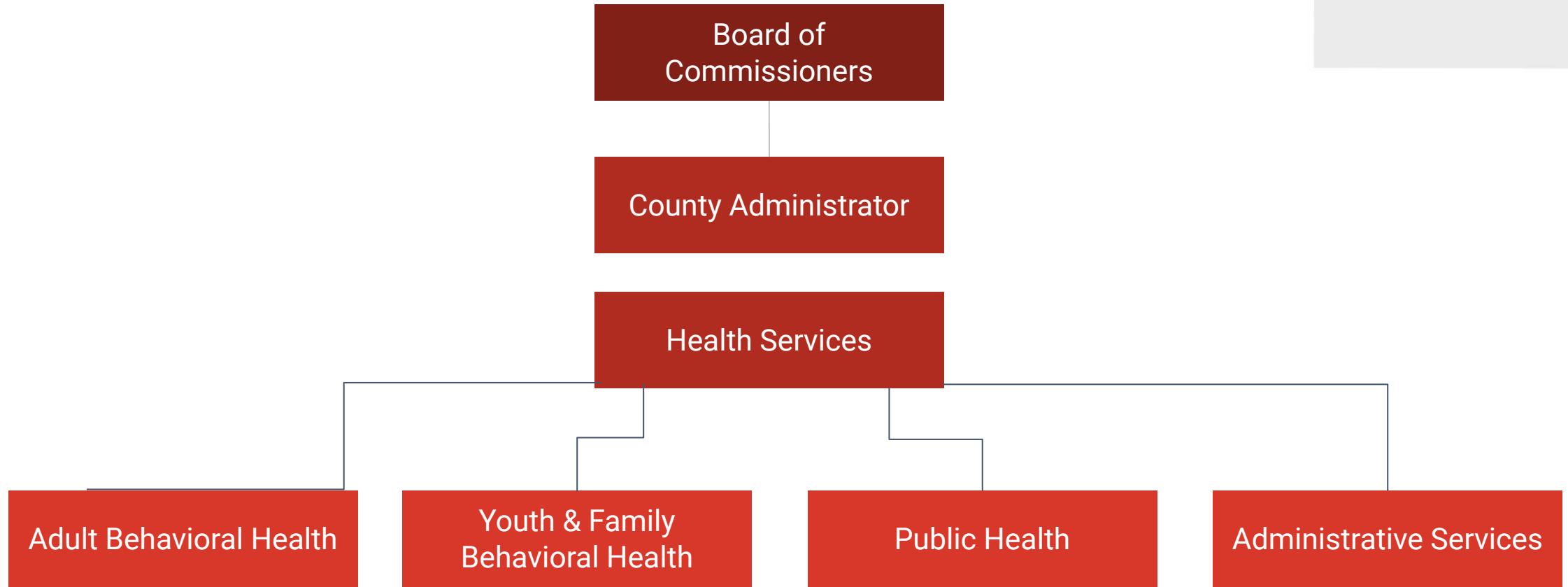
Polk County Overview

1. Demographics

- A. Population: 83,805
- B. County seat: Dallas
- C. Largest city: West Salem
- D. Largest population: 57.8%, ages 18-64
- E. Largest minority group: 13.1% Hispanic/Latino



Polk County Organizational Structure

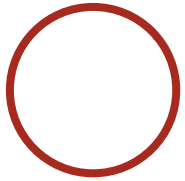


Polk County Public Health Overview

01	Direct Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Women, Infants & Children (WIC)• Reproductive Health• Immunizations• Home Visiting• Jail Medical
02	Surveillance & Investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicable Diseases• Animal Bites and Rabies• Community Health Assessment
03	Community Engagement/Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency Preparedness• Maternal Child Health/ Title V• Oregon Mother's Care• Tobacco Prevention & Education• Community Health Improvement Plan

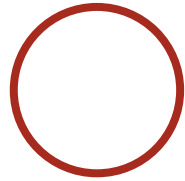


Polk County Public Health Overview



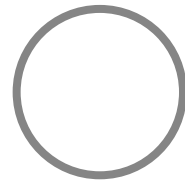
**Nurse Practitioner/
Registered Nurses**

Reproductive Health;
Immunizations; Home Visiting;
Communicable Disease



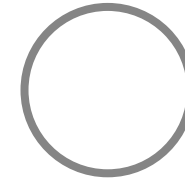
Public Health Workers

COVID-19 Case Investigation;
other reportable disease
investigation



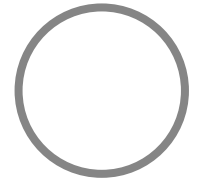
**Community Health
Coordinator**

Community engagement
activities



**Epidemiologist/
Preparedness Coordinator**

Epidemiological report; Public
Health emergency preparedness
program

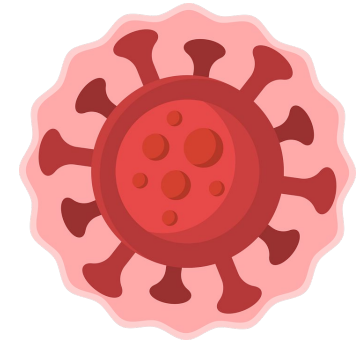


Support Staff

Vital records, billing, medical
assistant, WIC staff, reception

COVID-19 Response

1. Case Investigation and Contact Tracing
2. Public Information
3. Supporting Testing
4. Support logistical needs of the health system
5. Operational and policy decision making
6. Guidance for schools, businesses, and community at large



Collective Impact

1. Extended partnership with other LPHA's
2. Health Systems Partnership
3. Community Based Organizations
4. WOU Community Health + Polk County COVID-19 Project





Concluding Remarks

Program evaluation of student satisfaction and learning outcomes associated with participation in the WOU + Polk County Covid-19 Project

Daniel Dowhower Ph.D.

Overview of Presentation

- A Pandemic Fills a need....
- Student led program evaluation project
- Student identified learning outcomes
- Concluding comments

A Pandemic fills a need

- “I have a huge passion for health disparities and serving underserved populations and, of course, infectious disease so that's how I came to apply for this internship.”
- “In all honesty, either... I fake my internship, do a bunch of projects ... for a health program that you may or may not ever run, I wanted real experience...working with Dr.s VH and PL ... I was ready to just go to war with them over this.”

Overall	12
Gender	
Male	2
Female	10
Race/ethnicity	
White	8
Hispanic/Latino	2
Black	1
Asian/PI	1

Who participated?

- Eligible upon exiting the project
- Formally contacted via email and phone
- Consent and demographic survey completed prior to 45 minute interview
- Conducted via Zoom /audio transcription

Student Led Evaluation Project

- Undergraduate student new to project (Winter 2021) was lead student evaluator.
- Dr. Dowhower lead the evaluation project to support Co-Directors.
- Student's Role:
 - Developed semi-structured interview instrument
 - Pilot testing and editing
 - Interviewer training
 - Real-time interviewing
 - Editing of transcripts
 - Coding and codebook development

Skills Developed

<p>Communication with - general public</p>	<p>Active Listening, Tone, Being Real, recognizing it's not about you, working with ESL populations, making a positive contribution by not giving advice or lecturing, working to help others deal with not only COVID but other essential resources.</p>
<p>- with professionals</p>	<p>Exchange of knowledge and skill to help make better strategy, interpersonal communication, an understanding the difference for speaking and writing professionally; communication that leverage technology and resources to improve community well-being.</p>
<p>- with team members</p>	<p>Interaction with supervisors; ask for feedback/clarification; comfort saying I don't know</p>
<p>Team building</p>	<p>Learning to work together, assign roles, reach out to others for help, not overlapping work, self-awareness about how one communicates with others, development of a communication dynamic that allows for confidence in reaching out to others.</p>
<p>Value of Academics</p>	<p>Having the necessary professional KSAs and translating academic coursework to real life .</p>

Skills Quotes

“A lot of our communication was through zoom so I was able to professionally meet with Community partners through or remote access and just learning how to speak professionally using terminology” “It definitely lit a fire under my belly...it wasn't until I did the internship that I felt a burning passion for public health, even though I was public health major.”

“I believe team building is fundamental... because we all work in teams...we need...open communication... good relationships with our coworkers, supervisors, because without that...we're not going to be able to distribute necessary information or the resources we need”

Benefits Experienced

<p>Sense of belonging</p>	<p>Feeling connected to the division/university at large, feeling accepted, fitting in with other students and deeper relationships with professors</p>
<p>Confidence</p>	<p>Putting yourself out there, to be flexible, responsible and deliver on responsibilities, being stretched by responsibilities one does not feel ready for, feeling connected to the purpose or goal of public health</p>
<p>Emotional maturity</p>	<p>Developing self-understanding about one's thoughts and behaviors and how they impact situations that might be trying or challenging. Maintaining professionalism, handling difficult difficult people, taking time and having constructive conversations. Open to feedback, handling difficult situations, developing strategies for not taking things personally.</p>
<p>Leadership</p>	<p>Listening, critical thinking, conflict resolution, open to continual learning, time management, scheduling, planning, implementation, delegation, task completion, motivating/empathy</p>

Benefits Quotes

“I think like the biggest part was contact tracing and making those connections with community partners...my new job[is similar]...making connections with the providers and...professionals that's something I took from the project.”

“It taught me how to work as a team and taught me how to work with different businesses in the Community.”...“I think everyone has to have a little bit of empathy during this project, because you got to kind of put yourself in the population you're targeting shoes and know how to reach them I guess.”

Student Challenges

<p>Moving outside of comfort zone</p>	<p>doing things one is not comfortable doing, push yourself in unfamiliar places, to do things that you wouldn't normally do, trying things you never tried before and challenging oneself and improving one's skill set.</p>
<p>Life balance</p>	<p>learning how to arrange one's work responsibilities, student responsibilities, and personal time in order maximize personal health and satisfaction while remaining productive and successful.</p>
<p>Lack of experience</p>	<p>generally speaking, a lack of knowledge, skill, or insight gained from experience.</p>

Challenge Quotes

“I've always been a shy person...it is really tough to talk to strangers, especially if I'm cold calling them like I was for contact tracing.. it was really valuable being pushed into that role, because, by the end of my time with the internship I felt really confident in myself.”

“The main challenge for me was time management...I was taking a couple of online classes, working , and the project ..trying to balance..work to pay bills... be an active participant... carrying my weight...and whatnot.”

Concluding Remarks

The COVID project, for students, led to:

- A deeper connection to the department and university
- A deeper experience directly related to Public Health
- An experience that translated into a competitive skill set

In conclusion, reproducing this program would be a challenge, but begs an important set of questions:

- Is it possible to produce similar meaningful in class experiences?
- How can we create opportunities of different lengths across time?
- What, if anything, are the implications for Public Health programs and internship requirements?

Thank you!



Learn more about our project by visiting our website: <https://wou.edu/hexs/community-health-polk-county-covid-19-project/>
Email us at: communityhealth@mail.wou.edu