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Statement from Board Chair Kathryn Harrington regarding Phase 2 Reopening

“We are thankful for the diligence that Governor Kate Brown and the Oregon Health Authority have taken throughout the new coronavirus pandemic. The state’s continued focus on the data and grounding policy decisions in sound public health science is also appreciated.

As we have all experienced, this pandemic has been frustrating. We all would like the virus to stop interfering with our lives so that we can get back together with our friends and family and so our businesses can fully reopen. But it is critical that we all remember that this virus remains a serious threat to our public health – even fatal for some of our Washington County residents – and has disproportionately affected the historically underserved and marginalized here in our community.

We respect [the Governor’s decision](#) to link Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties into one regional territory when it comes to moving into Phase 2 together. In fact, we’ve long had a regional approach to this pandemic and other aspects of our public health services. By taking a regional approach, the first date Washington, Multnomah and Clackamas counties could move into Phase 2 would be July 10, but only if the Governor approves. Other counties throughout the state have now been ‘linked’ by the governor for similar public health-driven reasons.

It is important to remember that this virus knows no jurisdictional boundaries and could infect anyone who does not take the precautions our public health and medical professionals have been recommending for the past four months. We are especially concerned that vulnerable and high-risk individuals can be further exposed and that there could be more hospitalizations and deaths.

Please take these precautions seriously, including:

- Staying at home when you are sick.
- Wearing a face covering in public, including indoor public spaces.
- Washing your hands often.
- Maintaining six feet of physical distance from others.
- Limiting your interactions with people outside of your household.

More information about Washington County’s response to this pandemic can be found at <https://www.co.washington.or.us/covid-19>. Thank you.”