

# HR Prevents

## COVID-19 AND SUMMER SAFETY

By Kathy Smith, Office Manager, Hood River County Prevention Department  
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The past few months have seen a significant shift in our social behavior. We have come together as a community to support the Governor and the Hood River County Health Department to keep all our community members safe and well, following health guidelines and requirements.

Physical distancing, wearing masks, washing our hands, and staying home if you feel ill have all helped us to keep our region safe through the spring. But June is here, and our thoughts are turning to all the summer fun activities we have enjoyed in the past. Now it is most important we remember the lessons we have just learned.

Following Memorial Day, we had a significant increase in COVID-19 cases. We hope to avoid a similar trend for Father's Day and Fourth of July. To preserve the capacity of our healthcare system and protect our most

vulnerable community members, we need to continue to follow the health guidelines that have proven successful. The Hood River County Health Department is asking all community members and visitors to wear masks, maintain a six-foot physical distance, wash our hands, and **if you feel ill to stay home.**

People with the following symptoms may have COVID-19.

- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing



# REGIONAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY

By Kathy Smith, HRCPD Office Manager  
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**M**onths prior to the current COVID-19 pandemic a group of community organizations got together to collaborate on a comprehensive resource directory that would encompass the five counties making up the Columbia River Gorge (Hood River, Klickitat, Skamania, Sherman, and Wasco).

The idea is to provide a printed resource for community members listing available services, including physical / behavioral / dental health, social services, education, law enforcement, transportation, housing (including warming shelters), food, and much more, in the language they are most comfortable in. The Columbia Gorge News is printing the Regional Resource Directory this summer.

A longer-term goal is a website where clients and organization staff will benefit from an intuitive and easily accessible format with all useful resources from the printed directory. It will include a

community event calendar for all non-profit events, including classes, fundraisers, etc.

For this website effort to be sustainable, it must have initial and ongoing funding and support. Here is where our workgroup decided to look to the organizations in the region. What if organizations in the Regional Resource Directory paid a small annual fee to cover website costs? And what if that fee allowed each one access to the calendar of events and the ability to update and / or change their information. The more organizations who participate, the smaller the contribution for each.

Your input is essential to this process of finding funding for the website. We would love to hear your ideas, questions, and concerns. We will be hosting a Zoom meeting to discuss funding options.

If you are interested in participating in the Zoom meeting please **contact us by July 17<sup>th</sup>** at [kathy.smith@co.hood-river.or.us](mailto:kathy.smith@co.hood-river.or.us).

## QUIT IN QUARANTINE

*Taken from '2020 Action on Smoking & Health' by Dr. Harry Lando & Chris Bostic*

**T**hese times of health concerns and stress provide all the chance to take care of ourselves and our loved ones. We can make changes for the better, in our physical and mental health by starting an exercise routine, eating better, and letting go of habits that are not good for us. Data is showing that the risk of serious complications from Covid-19 is much higher for smokers. Those who smoke, need to take extra care to avoid exposure to the virus. It is not known if quitting smoking now will lower the risk of catching coronavirus but there are many good reasons to quit. While it is stressful to quit, there are tips that can help.

\***Don't go it alone.** Check out online support groups: <https://www.reddit.com/r/stopsmoking/>

\***Access help.** Over the counter nicotine gum, patches or lozenges can help. Talk with your doctor and/or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

\***Exercise more.** Exercise releases endorphins in your brain, reducing stress and improving mood. Check out on-line videos or go for a walk.

\***Try meditation.** There are many on-line resources for self-guided meditation. You can just close your eyes and breathe deep for a few minutes.

\***Try many techniques.** The more you do, the easier it will be to quit. Have a plan for what to do when the craving comes. Get the support from those around you.

\***Believe in yourself. You can do this.** Most people make multiple attempts before quitting for good. Pat yourself on the back. Don't give up. Celebrate small steps along the path to quitting. Remember, the longest journey starts with a single step. Every time you think about smoking but don't, every day you go with, is a victory!

## MISSING OUR HEALTH MEDIA CLUBS

By Nubia Contreras, Prevention Specialist, Health Media Club Coordinator  
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We have been missing our students so much since school was closed. We are busy planning several activities and trying to plan for the upcoming school year as best as we can. There are several scenarios that we are planning for, but we are hoping for the best and safety of the students.

Before school closed, we did have lots of fun with our students! We hosted a school dance with our high school club which was attended by a good group of students. There was a live band and lots of food. We would like to thank all our sponsors that helped us put the dance together.

At the middle schools we were finishing up creating educational posters to hang up around the school regarding e-cigarettes and letters to the editor related to the environment and cigarette butts around downtown. So, a friendly reminder to pick up after yourself and keep our town clean and safe from potential fires.

The Hood River Prevents website is also up and running with new and updated resources. There is a new Mental Health tab for adults and youths. There is a new Suicide tab as well to help anyone that might need it. We encourage you to check out the website at [www.hoodriverprevents.com](http://www.hoodriverprevents.com). If there are any questions, please reach out to our office at 541-386-2500.

## POLICY APPROACH TO TOBACCO

By Ross McLeod, Prevention & Education Specialist  
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**D**uring the past few months, the Prevention Department has been working with the Public Health Law Center to draft a Tobacco Retail License policy. Having a strong tobacco policy eliminates the burden of tobacco on youth and other members of our community who are more susceptible to tobacco marketing.

Our approach to drafting the policy included examining national and regional tobacco policies. We expanded national and regional policies to include some of the strongest tobacco regulations in the region, specifically to reduce loopholes. Our draft policy includes a ban on mobile tobacco vending, and specifies

no samples of tobacco for onsite consumption, which are common loopholes.

We also included a unique process of enforcement that provides education on proper ID checking and includes inspections tailored more toward providing retailer education along with the enforcement. In April we finalized the initial draft and shared with the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Prevention Coalition. The next step in the policy process will be sharing this information with policymakers in Hood River County and the City of Hood River. We anticipate completing this policymaker education by Fall of 2020.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### JULY:

- 1 - Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drug Coalition Meeting (ZOOM electronic meeting @3:30pm)
- 4 - 4<sup>th</sup> of July Independence Day

### AUGUST:

- 5 - Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drug Coalition Meeting (ZOOM electronic meeting @3:30pm)

### SEPTEMBER:

- 2 - Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drug Coalition Meeting (ZOOM electronic meeting @3:30pm)
- 2 - Labor Day Holiday



**Please reach out to our office with any questions, comments, suggestions, or concerns. You can reach our main office line at 541-386-2500.**

**We look forward to connecting with you!**