

COLUMBIA COUNTY

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BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON PROCLAMATION

2026 National Public Health Week Proclamation

Whereas, the week of April 6, 2026, is National Public Health Week and the theme is "Ready. Set. Action!" highlighting that public health actions occurring through scientific discoveries, legislation and community initiatives have significantly improved the health of all Americans; and

Whereas, significant strides have been made in public health since the inception of National Public Health Week in 1994, including the following public health successes:

- (1) childhood mortality, which was at a rate of 13.8 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1994, has now fallen to 5.4 deaths per 1,000 live births due to vaccines, better health care access, and nutrition;
- (2) smoking rates, which were as high as 25.5% among U.S. adults in 1994, have now fallen to 11.4 % due to comprehensive smoke-free policies, public awareness campaigns and taxation of tobacco products;
- (3) deaths due to HIV/AIDS, which peaked in 1994 at 49,095 AIDS-related deaths that year in the U.S., have dropped significantly with Antiretroviral therapy ensuring most people with HIV can live normal lifespans and prevention tools like PrEP significantly reduce transmission;
- (4) mental health awareness and treatment, with 40% of people with mental health conditions being untreated in 1994, has progressed with increased awareness, parity laws and integration into primary care, which have expanded access to mental health services and reduced treatment gaps;
- (5) lead poisoning, with 4.4% of U.S. children having elevated blood lead levels in 1994, has now fallen to less than 0.5% due to policies banning leaded gasoline and reducing lead in paint, pipes and water systems;
- (6) impacts of emerging environmental health hazards such as wildfire smoke or extreme heat were underrecognized before the new millennium but are now being mitigated by actions such as public health campaigns, local response resources including cooling centers, and other preparedness plans to protect the public from extreme weather, wildfires, and other regional threats;
- (7) pandemic preparedness has improved rapidly, especially led by scientific advancement in vaccine development and deployment, and communities have increased investments in infrastructure, stockpiles, and global monitoring for new diseases or outbreaks; and

Whereas, racial and ethnic minority populations in the United States continue to experience disparities in the burden of illness and death as compared with the entire population of the United States; and

Whereas, a person's health status can differ drastically by ZIP code due to differences in the built environment, environmental quality, community context, access to healthy food, access to education, and access to health care; and

Whereas, public health organizations use National Public Health Week to educate public policymakers, public health professionals, and the public on issues that are important to improving the health of the people of the United States; and

Whereas, public health professionals help communities prevent, prepare for, withstand, and recover from the impact of a full range of health threats, ranging from infectious disease outbreaks to natural disaster preparedness; and

Whereas, efforts to adequately support public health and the prevention of disease and injury can continue to transform a health system focused on treating illness into a health system focused on preventing disease and injury and promoting wellness.

NOW, THEREFORE, we, the Columbia County Board of Commissioners, do hereby proclaim the week of April 6-12, 2026, as National Public Health Week in Columbia County and call upon the people of Columbia County to observe this week by helping our families, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and leaders to recognize the contribution of scientists, local, city and state legislators, community activists, and public health workers in (1) adopting initiatives that have significantly improved the health and longevity of the people of our county and (2) encouraging continual vigilance to promote health and well-being for all citizens, as the theme states, "Ready. Set. Action!"

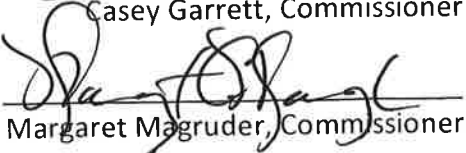
NOW, THEREFORE, the Columbia County Board of Commissioners hereby proclaims and recognizes the week of April 6-12, 2026, as National Public Health Week in Columbia County and encourages all county residents to join in the observation.

Dated at St. Helens, Oregon, this 8th day of April 2026. BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON



By: 
Kellie Jo Smith, Chair

By: 
Casey Garrett, Commissioner

By: 
Margaret Magruder, Commissioner