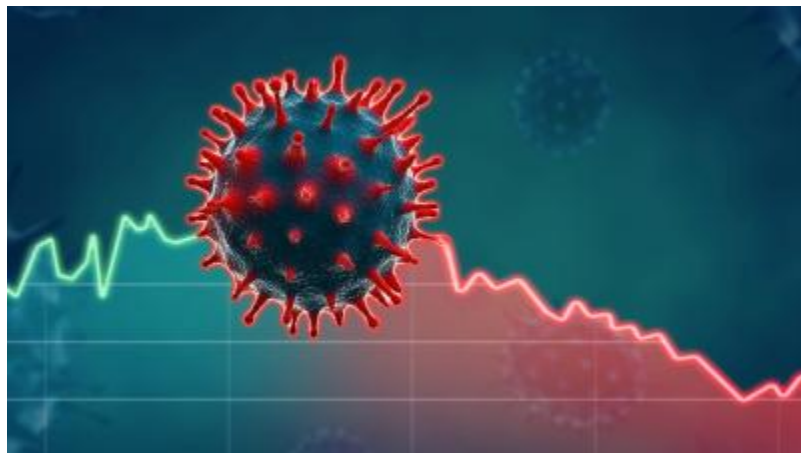


Public Health Emergencies

Public health emergencies are situations where health or medical circumstances exist that can affect an entire population usually through shared interactions, or community spaces. They can be defined as much by their health consequences as by their causes and precipitating events. These emergencies are situations whose scale, timing, or unpredictability threatens to

overwhelm routine capabilities, and require additional or extraordinary measures to contain or eliminate to ensure the safety of the public. The severity of a public health emergency is often measured by the number of people affected by its geographical extent, or the disease or death of the pathogenic process which it originates.



Communicable disease is perhaps the most common form of public health emergency. These diseases are those conditions that can be spread to others through air, touch, or contact with contaminated body fluids. Some of the most common communicable diseases are chlamydia, hepatitis A, B and C, giardia, salmonella, pertussis and campylobacter. Here in Clatsop County there have been several examples of communicable disease impacting our daily lives. For example, In 2015 the Knappa school district suffered from an outbreak of noro-virus that affected a significant percentage of the student body.

Not only is it important to be treated for infection, it is necessary for the health department to track communicable diseases in order to ensure the safety of the community by seeking to prevent disease outbreaks. All Oregon healthcare providers are required to report patients with the following conditions to their local health department. Reporting enables appropriate public health follow-up for patients, helps identify outbreaks, and provides a better understanding of Oregon morbidity (illness) patterns.