

Fighting Back

The Zonta Club of Roseburg proudly presents their 2021 Rose Day Award to the Douglas Public Health Network (DPHN) COVID-19 Response Team. Annually celebrated on International Women's Day each March 8th, the Rose Day Award recognizes individuals and organizations who unselfishly work to improve their community. The DPHN COVID-19 Response Team's efforts to educate people about the virus and slow its spread, has saved lives and will help restore jobs. Zonta particularly appreciates the efforts of the DPHN COVID-19 Response Team since the coronavirus has disproportionately impacted women locally and globally.

With over 100 live Facebook presentations and 365 continuous daily updates, the DPHN COVID-19 Response Team has been working diligently since March 2020 to keep Douglas County informed about COVID-19. Said Douglas County Public Health Officer, Dr. Bob Dannenhoffer, "we started the battle with COVID-19 with six people, now we have a multitude of private and public partners on the team."

The core team that researches new data, compiles information, prepares the daily updates, answers questions, and hosts the live Facebook presentations includes: Vanessa Becker, DPHN Public Information Officer; Tamara Howell, Douglas County COVID-19 Response Team (DCCRT) Public Information Officer; Christin Rutledge, Program Manager; and "Dr. Bob."

Additional members were added as the virus, plus information and mis-information morphed and spread. Thus, partners contributed their expertise and people were hired to staff the Hotline, provide testing, conduct contact tracing, provide food and services to those in quarantine, and help with vaccine distributions. In many cases, personnel hired came from jobs lost due to COVID-19. Dr. Bob noted that because of the multitude of community organizations and members working together, Douglas County performed much better than anticipated. Douglas County was originally predicted to be one of the hardest hit counties in the country due to our older, more rural population. However, with Oregon's more restrictive policies and the local teamwork, when compared to a county in Georgia and South Dakota with similar demographics and populations, Douglas County suffered less than 60 deaths and less than 2,700 cases, whereas the other two counties had over 180 deaths and over 11,000 cases. State wise, of Oregon's 36 counties, 13 had more cases and 12 more deaths than Douglas County.

Despite, Douglas County's success in keeping people informed and promoting coronavirus prevention, Dr. Bob still aches for those who have died locally and the impact on their families. He also feels for the kids who just want to go to school, mingle with their friends, and enjoy life's milestones. Additionally, he observed that while more men have died from the disease, women have been more impacted financially and socially by COVID-19. Women have born the brunt of job loss, salary reduction, returning home to care for others, plus had to step up to educate their children as schools closed. Interestingly, the countries that performed the best against the coronavirus, such as Germany and New Zealand, are run by women.

Key messages the team wants to convey about COVID-19 prevention are: stay home, practice social distancing, and wear a mask. For the vaccine, Dr. Bob said, "it's a great vaccine and works amazingly well!" The cases in the local nursing homes demonstrated that over 80% of those who were partially or fully vaccinated were protected from the virus. Conversely 100% of the patients who were not vaccinated contracted the virus. Dr. Bob is confident as the county receives more doses Douglas

County will start catching up vaccinating those who are eligible. The DPHN has no control over the number of doses sent to the county each week.

Despite the chaos that the pandemic created, there were some silver linings. In preparing a *Ted Talk* to be aired this spring, Dr. Bob released a couple “Ted teasers” about the improvement of marine mammal populations and the reduction of human premature birth rates during the coronavirus outbreak.

Come fall, Dr. Bob hopes COVID-19 has been slowed. However, even when coronavirus activities are reduced, the DPHN will still be busy with its other duties such as improving the county’s health by fighting issues such as smoking, alcohol, drugs, and obesity. Meanwhile, Roseburg Zonta appreciates the DPHN Covid-19 Response Team and all of their partners for helping our community through this pandemic.

The live COVID-19 information sessions by Dr. Bob appear on the DPHN Facebook page Tuesdays at 6 p.m. and Friday at 4 p.m. Additionally, information about the virus and other health issues can be found on the DPHN website at: douglaspublichealthnetwork.org. Zonta is a service organization of men and women dedicated to empowering women locally and worldwide through service and advocacy.

SIDEBAR: ADDITIONAL TEAM MEMBERS:

Douglas Public Health Network
State of Oregon Board of County Commissioners, Douglas County
Aviva Health
CHI Mercy Health Mercy Medical Center
Douglas County Sheriff’s Office
Lower Umpqua Hospital District
Douglas Forest Protective Association
Umpqua Health
Adapt
Veterans Health Administration Roseburg VA Health Care System
Douglas County Sheriff Search and Rescue
American Red Cross Southwest Oregon Chapter
US Forest Service

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