

WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED
PRIOR TO THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' SESSION
ON
THURSDAY, October 21, 2021
AT
10:00 A.M.

Questions, concerns or comments about these items can be directed
to staff or the Commissioners by contacting the Commissioners' office at

(503) 434-7501

OR

BOCINFO@co.yamhill.or.us

From: Val Blaha <music@valblaha.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 9:04 PM
To: BOC Info
Subject: public comment : Agenda Item I7, 10/21/2021 meeting

[This email originated outside of Yamhill County]

re: Agenda Item I7, 10/21/2021 meeting

Dear Yamhill County Commissioners,

I see there's yet another letter to our governor in this week's BOC packet, asking her again to end the vaccine "mandate". (It's unclear to me as to why this was in quotations in the letter. Is it not an actual mandate?) This newest call to **protect only those who choose to avoid social responsibility** is based on a just-published article which looked at **data for one week** relating to vaccination rates and covid cases. The article claims to demonstrate that the rates of covid cases are not related to vaccination rates. The extrapolation in the letter is that because the data in this study didn't show lower case rates (**for that one week**) in US counties and countries with higher vaccination rates, we shouldn't require people who work with the public, such as teachers, nurses, police, etc. to get vaccinated.

Validity of the study aside, the letter ignores an important fact: **the rate of spread among those who are vaccinated is lower than those who aren't vaccinated**, likely due to viral loads being lower among the vaccinated. This means that unvaccinated people are more likely to spread the virus, and to keep it spreading in our community. And they are spreading it to both the vaccinated and unvaccinated. Not only that, by serving as hosts for the virus, they are increasing the likelihood of mutation of new variants.

Another very important fact: **the rates of serious illness, hospitalization and deaths among those who are vaccinated is a fraction of the rates of the same among those who are not vaccinated**. This means that those who are vaccinated are not getting as ill, and therefore not putting as much of a burden on our already overworked systems, or leaving children or elderly without caregivers.

This has real implications, particularly for those who are more medically fragile, or who cannot be vaccinated. A non-vaccinated teacher is more likely to get covid, and to spread it to her non-vaccinated students than a vaccinated teacher. At this point, I don't personally care anymore if people who are anti-vax get the virus, but I do have concern for others who are susceptible. And I resent the unvaccinated for volunteering to be willing hosts for the virus, especially since many of them are not masking, distancing or taking other precautions, as was clear from an anti-vaccine protest held in McMinnville this past weekend.

On a related note, the article authors do suggest that **non-pharmacological prevention efforts need to be renewed**. I have yet to hear a peep from at least 2 of our commissioners encouraging masking, despite the fact that we know that it is one of the best ways of reducing the spread of the virus. In fact, I'd assert that it's the lack of proper safety precautions that is the main cause of the virus spread. **I fail to see how some community leaders are opposing vaccine mandates while at the same time not whole-heartedly encouraging masking and other precautions**. The only conclusions I can come to about this disconnect

is that either a) you don't care about people getting sick or disabled, or dying, or b) you don't believe the virus is a real threat, despite the deaths of 700,000 Americans.

In 2020 mask mandates were a favorite target of those who purported to support "freedom". Now it's vaccination mandates. What's next... if the governor withdraws the vaccine mandate, will you be sending letters opposing masking requirements for schools and medical facilities?

Is the idea of public health really antithetical to our democratic principles? To our Constitution?

In a perfect world, our public workers wouldn't need to get a vaccine if they didn't want it. But unfortunately, too many people acted too selfishly over the past 18 months, and now we are at the point where unvaccinated workers pose the biggest threat to their fellow workers, patients, students, and the public in general. **I fail to see why people are entitled to their public-facing jobs if they won't protect the very people they serve.**

Sincerely,

Val Blaha

McMinnville, OR

Links:

<https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2021/evidence-shows-that-covid-19-variants-are-largely-spread-among-unvaccinated-people/>

<https://www.healthline.com/health-news/unvaccinated-people-are-increasing-the-chances-for-more-coronavirus-variants-heres-how>

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-941fcf43d9731c76c16e7354f5d5e187>