

Survey shows vaccine opposition dipping among Oregonians

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While the number of Oregonians who were staunchly anti-vaccine has declined, a still-significant number who generally live in rural areas of the state say nothing will convince them to get vaccinated.

And a significant percentage of the state's workers are poised to undergo unprecedented turnover as many consider leaving their jobs in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those are among the findings in a pair of reports from the most recent survey of Oregonians by Robert Parker and Benjamin Clark of the Institute for Policy Research and Engagement in the School of Planning, Public Policy and Management, part of the College of Design.

The findings are from the pair's [third survey of Oregonians](#), conducted last November to measure various aspects of COVID-19's effects on the state's people and economy.

Of those respondents, 18 percent said they would never get vaccinated, which is down from 24 percent in their December 2020 survey.

"That's good news," Parker said. "The bad news is that while the percentage of people who said they would never get vaccinated went down, that's still a substantial number of people who say, 'No way. I'm just not going to get vaccinated.'"

Clark's analysis shows that for each additional percentage point a county is fully vaccinated, the death rate decreases by more than five people per 100,000 in county population.

A few factors contributed to number of residents changing their stance on the vaccine, Parker said. One of which was the pandemic's progression, particularly during last summer's surge from the delta variant of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

"There was this glimmer of hope last spring that maybe the worst was behind us," Parker said, "and then delta hit. And if you look at the statistics in the summary of the report, there's a big wave of vaccinations

that occur during the delta wave."

As was reflected in previous reports by Clark and Parker, a clear divide continues to exist between the state's rural and urban areas when it comes to vaccination rates, with some counties in the northwestern part of the state exceeding 80 percent while lows below 50 percent can be found in a few southeastern counties.

"That's 800,000 people who are unvaccinated," Parker said. "That's a big chunk of the population in a state that's about 4.2 million people."

The survey also showed that mandates were effective in encouraging people to get vaccinated, with 10 percent of Oregonians indicating that's what pushed them to get vaccinated.

"I think we've seen a really significant nudge from the vaccines mandates," Clark said in a recent interview with Jefferson Public Radio. "They've helped to push people who were hesitant into that column of vaccination."

Conversely, another 5 percent said they would never get vaccinated.

"So that's 80,000 people who were potentially willing to risk their livelihoods for their personal perspectives," Parker said.

Meanwhile, the pandemic is affecting Oregon's workforce in other ways as well. Twenty-seven percent of Oregonians reported a change in employment status during the pandemic. Eleven percent lost their job, 5 percent quit and a little more than 2 percent retired.

Twenty-six percent of Oregonians indicated they were considering quitting their current job, and an additional 10 percent indicated they were unsure whether they were considering quitting their current job.

This comes despite three quarters of the respondents also saying they were very or somewhat satisfied with their current employment.

"We're talking about up to a third of Oregonians may be jumping jobs," Parker said. "Most people are basically saying, 'The conditions of my employment are not satisfactory to me. I'm going to go see if I can find something better or just sit on the sidelines for a while and see what happens.'"

One consequence of the pandemic has been what some are calling "the Great Resignation" as people opt to make career changes. Parker recently heard it termed "the Great Renegotiation," which he thinks is more accurate.

"Turnover is pretty common within the workforce, but this level of turnover I think is unprecedented," Parker said. "And I think for the first time in my lifetime, labor has some leverage over management."

Frontline businesses—leisure and hospitality, arts, entertainment, restaurants, hotels—were hit hard by the pandemic as consumers rapidly switched from buying services to buying goods, which led to the current supply chain issues as soaring demand far outstripped capacity to deliver them. Now, as consumers begin gravitating back to services, those businesses struggle to find employees. Parker expects that to continue.

"The problem is, you go to your favorite restaurant and they're closed some days of the week because they can't staff up or the prices have gone up substantially," Parker said. "The real question is how long is this going to take to unfurl. And I think part of the answer to that is directly related to the next phases of what happens with the pandemic."

Other long-term effects have yet to emerge, ranging from the power balance among employees and employers to a potential distrust in long-

established vaccines, among others.

"There's millions of households and millions of people who are living with this long term or have lost a loved one or a parent," Parker said, "and I think we'll see the repercussions of that for decades.

"At this point, I think, I feel like we're all ready for this to be over going into year three of it."

More information: papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4019586

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