

## QuickPoint! – Oregon’s Last Mask Mandate Has Been Lifted, But State Policy Guarantees More Lockdowns in the Next Pandemic

By Eric Fruits, Ph.D.

Earlier this month, Oregon [lifted](#) its mask mandate for hospitals and other health care facilities. For many, it’s one of the last steps indicating the COVID-19 pandemic is behind us. But, it’s also a reminder that one state policy caused so much damage during the pandemic.

That policy is Oregon’s “Certificate of Need” laws. If a health care provider wants to open a new facility or significantly expand an existing facility, the provider must get permission from the state and demonstrate that there is a need for more facilities. As part of the process, competing providers can weigh in and provide evidence that current capacity is sufficient. This imposes a huge roadblock to expanding health care services in the state.

As governor, Kate Brown imposed one of the most stringent and long-lasting lockdowns of any state. She stated time after time that these lockdowns were necessary to avoid overwhelming the state’s limited supply of hospital beds.

Oregon has the [lowest](#) number of hospital beds per capita in the country. There was a real risk that hospitals would be overwhelmed. That’s because our Certificate of Need laws stifled the construction of new hospital beds.

Now that this pandemic is over, we should begin preparing for the next one by repealing Oregon’s Certificate of Need laws so we can have enough hospital beds to avoid future long-running lockdowns.

---

*Eric Fruits, Ph.D. is Vice President of Research at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization.*

4850 SW Scholls Ferry Road  
Suite 103  
Portland, Oregon 97225

t: 503.242.0900  
f: 503.242.3822  
info@cascadepolicy.org  
www.cascadepolicy.org

Cascade Policy Institute is a tax-exempt educational organization as defined under IRS code 501 (c)(3). Nothing appearing in this Cascade Commentary is to be construed as necessarily representing the views of Cascade or its donors. The views expressed herein are the author’s own.

