



**Lincoln County  
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# **MEDIA RELEASE**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **DISASTER RESPONSE EXERCISE PLANNED FOR MAY 15 AND 16**

May 8, 2026 – Newport, Ore.

NEWPORT, Ore. (May 08, 2026) – For the first time, Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital and Lincoln County Emergency Management will co-host the Oregon Health Authority-sponsored Pathfinder exercise. This full-scale mass casualty disaster response exercise is planned for May 15-16. This event is closed to the public and only registered participants can attend. More than 100 military members, medical personnel, student nurses, and civilians will participate in this annual Oregon training event.

“This full-scale exercise simulates a catastrophic Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami. It focuses on the critical window when coastal communities are isolated, overwhelmed, and operating with severely limited infrastructure,” said Dr. Eric Gebbie, Director of Emergency Operations, Oregon Health Authority (OHA).

“It’s important during a crisis that all agencies understand and use a common language, align communications technologies, and build shared processes to strengthen coordination,” said Dr. Gebbie. “It takes practice to make that happen. This exercise brings together hospital, local, state, and federal partners to do just that.”

The drill begins on Friday afternoon with lecture-based training for participants at the Samaritan Center for Health Education. Early Saturday morning, community members who have volunteered to be pretend victims will arrive at the center to

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receive their assignments and moulage – special effects makeup depicting injuries. The training will extend into clinical areas of the hospital (where patients are not seen on weekends), so Emergency Department staff can train on the triage process, skills, patient flows and tracking.

“My staff will take turns participating in the training, so there will be no impact on care given to actual emergency patients we may have at that time,” said Pamela Halbrook, Samaritan’s regional Emergency Services Manager. “We’re excited to have this opportunity for hands-on training that will sharpen our skills and help us be a more cohesive team when the need arises.”

Local participants in the exercise include Lincoln County first responders, Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital, Lincoln County Emergency Management, City of Newport, Lincoln County Public Health, U.S. Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Life Flight Network. State participants include Oregon Disaster Medical Team, OHA’s Health Security Preparedness and Response program staff and SERV-OR volunteers, Oregon National Guard, Salem Hospital, and Oregon Health & Sciences University.

OHA leveraged \$25,000 of its funding through the U.S. Health and Human Services Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program to pay for the exercise. This, along with the federal Healthcare Preparedness Program, provides states, counties, and hospitals with resources to support disaster preparedness activities. Activities covered by the funds include planning, training, and exercising.

While local, state, and federal partners gather to practice response, this gives communities another reminder of the importance of personal preparedness. Take time today to review your family emergency plan or check items in your emergency kit. Learn more about how to be Four Week Coastal Cascadia Ready at our website: <https://www.co.lincoln.or.us/790/Plan-Prepare>

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