



November 19, 2020

For immediate release

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Eleven COVID-related deaths in the Panhandle reported, Panhandle total deaths 42 Panhandle residents urged to celebrate upcoming holidays safely this year

The following COVID-related deaths in the Panhandle are being reported:

- Box Butte County female in her 80s
- Dawes County male in his 80s
- Grant County male in his 70s
- Kimball County male in his 60s
- Morrill County male in his 80s
- Scotts Bluff County:
 - Two females: one in her 60s and one in her 90s
 - Two males: one in his 60s and one his 70s
- Sheridan County: two females in their 80s

“We wish to express our sincerest condolences in the passing of eleven Panhandle residents. We send their friends and loved ones peace and comfort during their time of loss,” expressed Kim Engel, Panhandle Public Health District Director.

The fall and winter holiday seasons are traditionally a time to gather with loved ones and celebrate. Participating in virtual gatherings or limiting celebrations to with those within your own household pose the lowest risk for COVID spread. Please help slow the spread of COVID and preserve hospital capacity.

If you choose to celebrate with people outside of your household, it is recommended to hold only small, outdoor gatherings and ensuring that attendees maintain a safe social distance.

If you plan to host or attend a small, indoor celebration: wear a mask, keep your distance, wash your hands often, and limit the number of people who handle and serve food.

Traveling increases your risk of exposure and the spread of COVID-19. The best way to prevent the spread of COVID this holiday season is to stay home.

- Avoid the Three Cs:
 - Avoid Crowded Places – Avoid gathering in groups where you cannot maintain 6-feet of distance from others

- Avoid Close Contact – Wear a mask over your nose and mouth or maintain 6-foot distance when you are spending more than 15 total minutes with people you don't live with
- Avoid Confined Spaces – Avoid enclosed spaces with poor ventilation

Unified Command confirms 444 more cases of COVID in the Panhandle since last reporting on Monday, November 16. Recoveries are available on the Panhandle dashboard at www.pphd.org. The investigations are underway, all close contacts will be quarantined.

All Ages: 444

County	Cases
Banner	3
Box Butte	53
Cheyenne	33
Dawes	31
Deuel	2
Garden	1
Grant	2
Kimball	13
Morrill	34
Scotts Bluff	257
Sheridan	12
Sioux	2
Under Investigation	1

Exposure Type

Community	12%
Close Contact	14%
Travel	0%
Under Investigation	73%

March 2-November 19, 2020

- Total Tests Conducted: 24,667
- Positive: 5,082
- Cumulative Positivity Rate: 20.6%
- Recovered: 2,688
- Active Cases: 2,352
- Deaths: 42
- Active Hospitalizations: 85

- **Total Cumulative Hospitalizations: 344**

Testing information and access for the Panhandle area:

- You can sign up for the following free testing at [Testnebraska.com](https://www.testnebraska.com) or 402-207-9377:
 - Box Butte General Hospital in **Alliance**: Monday-Friday, 9-10am
 - 212 East 24th Street
 - **Chadron** Community Hospital: Mondays & Fridays, 7-9am
 - 821 Morehead Street (Old Hospital ER Entrance next to Wilson Park)
 - **Other testing opportunities for symptomatic patients may be available through the hospital as ordered by your Primary Care Practitioner, call the hospital at 747-2466 with questions.**
 - **Gordon** Memorial Hospital: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2-4pm
 - Regional West Health Services in **Scottsbluff**: Monday & Wednesday, Noon-3pm; Tuesdays & Fridays, 1pm-4pm; Call 308-630-2100 for other testing opportunities for symptomatic patients.
 - **Sidney** Regional Medical Center: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays, 7-9:30am
- Community Action Health Center in **Gering**: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays, 7-8am
 - Testing is free, sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/yvdxr5mc>
- Alliance Community Pharmacy in **Alliance**: Monday-Friday, 7:30am-6pm; Saturday-Sunday, 9am-5pm
 - For people experiencing symptoms, same day results. Call 308-629-1045 for appointment, fee is \$125.
- Morrill County Community Hospital in **Bridgeport**: Daily
 - Call 308-262-1616 for testing, same day results, insurance can be billed.
- Contact your local hospital or clinic for information on testing access.

Panhandle Public Health District, Region 21, 22, and 23 Emergency Management, and Scotts Bluff County Health Department are working as a unified command on this evolving situation. Essential updates will be regularly communicated to the public and community partners.

The Panhandle COVID dashboard is updated weekdays at 4:30 pm MT and available at www.pphd.org. For the most up to date information from the CDC, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety, and quality of life for all who live, learn, work, and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community. Visit our website www.pphd.org.