



June 30, 2020

For immediate release

For more information, contact: Kim Engel, Director, 308-760-2415, kengel@pphd.org

Public support of mask-wearing continues to increase

Five more cases announced; Panhandle total: 303, Active: 114, Recovered: 186, Deaths: 3

In recent months, the topic of wearing masks has become politically divisive, despite public health guidance that they are the best defense restricting the spread of COVID-19.

- “Senator Mitch McConnell says Americans must have no stigma in wearing face masks.” McConnell endorsed wearing face masks as part of a “new middle ground” between a return to normal life and strict coronavirus restrictions. “We need new routines, new rhythms, and new strategies for this new middle ground in between. It’s the task of each family, each small business, each employer, and all levels of government to apply common sense and make this happen,” McConnell said.
- That same day, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy said, “every American has a responsibility to wear a mask.”
- On Sunday, Vice President Pence said, “wearing a mask is just a good idea.”
- Goldman Sachs analysts found reducing the spread of the virus through mask-wearing could be a substitute for strict lockdown measures that would otherwise shave 5%—or \$1 trillion—off the US GDP.
- “If a face mask mandate meaningfully lowers coronavirus infections, it could be valuable not only from a public health perspective but also from an economic perspective because it could substitute for renewed lockdowns that would otherwise hit GDP,” the researchers wrote.
- The University of Washington has added projections for what universal masking in the state would do to the daily COVID-19 case count in Nebraska.

COVID-19 testing is available at Community Action Health Center: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 7am-8am. Testing is open to those that are symptomatic or close contact to a positive case. Sign up today <https://tinyurl.com/y7msahzq>.

Unified Command confirms five more cases of COVID-19 in the Panhandle:

County	Demographics	Exposure Type
Kimball	Male in his 60s	Community Spread
Morrill	Female in her 50s	Close Contact
Morrill	Male in his 60s	Close Contact
Scotts Bluff	Female in her 50s	Close Contact
Scotts Bluff	Male in his 30s	Close Contact

Close contact and exposure are defined as at least 15 minutes, less than six feet apart. There are no community exposure sites identified. The investigations are complete, all close contacts will be quarantined and actively monitored twice daily for fever and respiratory symptoms by public health officials.

One new recovery in Scotts Bluff County brings the total recoveries to 186.

March 2-June 30, 2020

Total Tests Conducted: 5,310

Positive: 303

Cumulative Positivity Rate: 5.7%

Recovered: 186

Active Cases: 114

Active Hospitalizations: 3

Total Cumulative Hospitalizations: 33

Deaths: 3

- **Banner County: 1 case (recovered)**
- **Box Butte County: 3 cases (recovered)**
- **Cheyenne County: 20 cases (7 active, 13 recovered)**
- **Dawes County: 2 cases (recovered)**
- **Garden County: 4 cases (recovered)**
- **Kimball County: 12 cases (2 active, 10 recovered)**
- **Morrill County: 38 cases (24 active, 14 recovered)**
- **Scotts Bluff County: 213 cases (73 active, 137 recovered, 3 deaths)**
- **Sheridan County: 4 cases (active)**
- **Sioux County: 6 cases (4 active, 2 recovered)**

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.

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.