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For immediate release

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**PPHD Director encourages residents to show the Panhandle spirit by assisting elderly friends, family, and neighbors get registered for their COVID vaccine**

**Nebraska residents 18-64** can now sign up for the COVID vaccine at <https://vaccinate.ne.gov>. The Spanish version will be coming in the next week or so. It is not first come, first served and people will have a chance to schedule appointments when it is their turn and vaccine is available.

**Panhandle residents 65 and older** are still encouraged to register via the following form: <https://tinyurl.com/ycpxzr5d>. The site has a Spanish option available as well. Online link completion is preferred but people can call 308-262-5764 or 308-633-2866 ext. 101. This will put people on the list that is being coordinated with local vaccine providers. When vaccines are available, appointments will be scheduled, and individuals will be called days ahead.

Both links are accessible at [www.pphd.org](http://www.pphd.org) on the home screen. Registration is simple and takes less than a couple of minutes.

As of today, 5,101 Panhandle residents have received the COVID vaccine. Health care personnel, long-term care, and those 75 and older are currently being vaccinated. This will take several more weeks. People who are fully COVID immunized by receiving both doses, will not be required to quarantine due to close contact.

“This is the time to engage the important Panhandle spirit we are well-known for and think of your elderly friends, family, and neighbors to help them get registered for their COVID vaccine,” said Kim Engel, Panhandle Public Health District Director.

She added, “We can’t underscore enough the importance of residents getting a COVID vaccine when they are eligible. Our case fatality rate is higher than the state average. The COVID vaccine is a critical piece in keeping our most vulnerable residents safe.”

DHHS has defined the list of medical conditions as the following for individuals 18-64:

- Asthma
- Cancer
- Cerebrovascular disease affecting blood vessels
- Chronic Kidney Disease

- Chronic Liver Disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Chronic Lung Disease
- Diabetes Type 1
- Diabetes Type 2
- Down Syndrome
- Heart conditions such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)
- Neurologic conditions
- Pregnancy
- Pulmonary Fibrosis
- Sickle Cell Disease
- Thalassemia (a type of blood disorder)
- Weakened immune system due to solid organ transplant (kidney, liver, pancreas, heart, or lung)
- Weakened immune system from blood or bone marrow transplant, HIV, using steroid or other medications.

COVID vaccinations are also available at the Scottsbluff Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) for veterans enrolled in the VA Health Care system. Vaccinations are by appointment only, no walk-ins. Call 308-225-5330 for appointment scheduling.

As a reminder, Panhandle Unified Command has shifted to a weekly briefing on Mondays @3:30pm MT and corresponding communications unless critical information transpires in the week and necessitates sooner.

#### **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

Current COVID testing access can be found at [www.pphd.org](http://www.pphd.org).

The Panhandle COVID dashboard is updated weekdays at 4:30 pm MT and available at [www.pphd.org](http://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, 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.

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](http://www.pphd.org).