



December 14, 2020

For immediate release

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

Two COVID-related deaths in the Panhandle reported, Panhandle total deaths 97 Panhandle Vaccine Timeline

Two additional COVID-related deaths in the Panhandle are being reported bringing the total deaths to 97. A Kimball County male in his 90s and a Scotts Bluff County male in his 80s have recently passed.

“We wish to express our sincerest condolences with the friends and loved ones in the loss of our fellow Panhandle residents. We share peace and comfort with you especially during this holiday season,” said Kim Engel, Panhandle Public Health District Director.

As the vaccine becomes available mid-December in the Panhandle for specific groups, each phase is broken down as follows:

- Phase 1a: Healthcare personnel: hospitals, home healthcare, pharmacies, EMS, outpatient, public health, dentists, optometrists, and behavioral health
- Phase 1b: First responders, education sector, food/agriculture, utilities, and transportation
- Phase 1c: 65 years of age, vulnerable populations (disabled, homeless) congregate settings (incarcerated, colleges/universities)
- Phase 2: General Population

The vaccine is a critical step to getting life back to normal as possible. Common side effects are pain and swelling on the arm where you got the shot. Throughout the rest of your body: fever, chills, tiredness, and headache are also common.

It’s important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to help stop this pandemic as we learn more about how COVID vaccines work in real-world conditions. Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others, stay at least 6 feet away from others, avoid crowds, and wash your hands often.

Unified Command confirms 161 more cases of COVID in the Panhandle since last reporting on Thursday, December 10. Recoveries are available on the Panhandle dashboard at www.pphd.org. The investigations are underway, all close contacts will be quarantined.

All Ages: 161

County	Cases
Banner	2
Box Butte	20
Cheyenne	16
Dawes	10
Deuel	5
Garden	0
Grant	0
Kimball	28
Morrill	3
Scotts Bluff	54
Sheridan	23
Sioux	0

Exposure Type	
Community	36%
Close Contact	43%
Travel	0%
Under Investigation	20%

March 2-December 14, 2020

- **Total Tests Conducted: 28,492**
- **Positive: 6,948**
- **Recovered: 5,493**
- **Active Cases: 1,358**
- **Last Week's Positivity Rate: 42.5%**
- **Deaths: 97**
- **Active Hospitalizations: 47**
- **Total Cumulative Hospitalizations: 438**
- **Last week's cases: 438**
- **Doubling time (November 5-December 12): 37 days**

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-feet 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.

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, 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.