



August 17, 2020

For immediate release

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**Two recent incidents show the value of mask-wearing as a critical prevention tool
Panhandle total: 504, Active: 64, Recovered: 434, Deaths: 6**

If a person is confirmed positive for COVID-19 and has been in close contact with another person, as long as both individuals are wearing a mask, the positive case will be required to self-isolate and the close contact will not be required to self-quarantine only monitor for symptoms.

This continues to stress the importance of mask-wearing, especially when social distancing is difficult to maintain. Two recent school incidents have conveyed the importance of mask-wearing. Had this critical COVID-19 prevention tool not been implemented, it could have delayed the start of school because a large number of staff would have been required to self-quarantine.

Unified Command confirms fifteen more cases of COVID-19 in the Panhandle. The investigations are complete, all close contacts will be quarantined and actively monitored for symptoms by public health officials.

Children 19 and under: 3		
County	Cases	Exposure Type
Dawes	2	Community Spread
Scotts Bluff	1	Community Spread

Adults: 12		
County	Cases	Exposure Type
Box Butte	1	Close Contact
Dawes	1	Close Contact
Dawes	7	Community Spread
Scotts Bluff	2	Community Spread
Scotts Bluff	1	Close Contact

Unified Command confirms seven more recoveries in the Panhandle:

Recovered: 7

County	Total
Deuel	1
Morrill	2
Scotts Bluff	4

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
 - Ambulance Bay on the east side of the emergency department, watch for the green arrows
 - **Chadron** Community Hospital: Mondays & Fridays, 7-9am
 - Collections are at 821 Morehead Street (Old Hospital ER Entrance next to Wilson Park)
 - **Gordon** Memorial Hospital: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2-4pm
 - Regional West Health Services in **Scottsbluff**: Monday-Friday, Noon-4pm
 - **Sidney** Regional Medical Center: Tuesdays & Thursday, 7-9am
- Community Action Health Center in **Gering**: Mondays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays, 7-8am
 - Testing is free, sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/yydxr5mc>
- Morrill County Community Hospital in **Bridgeport**: Daily
 - Call 308-262-1616 for testing, same day results, insurance will be billed
- Contact your local hospital or clinic for information on testing access.

March 2-August 17, 2020

- **Total Tests Conducted: 9,847**
- **Positive: 504**
- **Cumulative Positivity Rate: 5.1%**
- **Recovered: 434**
- **Active Cases: 64**
- **Deaths: 6**
- **Active Hospitalizations: 4**
- **Total Cumulative Hospitalizations: 54**

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.