



September 8, 2020

For immediate release

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**Panhandle Public Health District is moving to Phase 4 of the Governor’s Directed Health Measure on September 11**

**Panhandle total: 711, Active: 83, Recovered: 622, Deaths: 6**

“We understand the need for our communities to continue to have relaxed measures, but please think of people you meet every day who need your continued protection and vigilance. As we move into this new phase, your actions are more critical now than ever before. We all want to feel a sense of normalcy, but we must do it safely. Please continue to do these very simple acts out of kindness and humility for others,” said Kim Engel, Health Director.

It remains critical to practice the prevention strategies of social distancing, wearing a mask when we can’t keep 6 feet apart, staying home when we don’t feel good, and increased hand hygiene.

This is important because moving into Phase 4, does not mean we are in the green on the risk dial. In fact, our risk is likely to increase as the restrictions are decreased. We can do more together by taking personal responsibility to reduce the risk of COVID. In fact, if we wear a mask when we cannot keep 6 feet apart, there is hardly anything we can’t do.

Event gathering safety plans at locations with an occupancy of 500 or more are still required to be submitted and approved by Panhandle Unified Command. Many plans are in place and are working so we don’t anticipate them changing.

Unified Command confirms 28 more cases of COVID in the Panhandle since last reporting on Thursday, September 3. The investigations are underway, all close contacts will be quarantined and actively monitored for symptoms by public health officials.

<b>Children 19 and under: 6</b>		
<b>County</b>	<b>Cases</b>	<b>Exposure Type</b>
<b>Dawes</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Close Contact</b>
<b>Scotts Bluff</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Close Contact</b>
<b>Sheridan</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Community Spread</b>

**Adults: 22**

County	Cases	Exposure Type
Box Butte	2	Close Contact
Box Butte	1	Community Spread
Box Butte	1	Unknown
Cheyenne	1	Community Spread
Dawes	3	Close Contact
Dawes	2	Community Spread
Dawes	1	Unknown
Scotts Bluff	3	Close Contact
Scotts Bluff	4	Community Spread
Scotts Bluff	1	Unknown
Sheridan	2	Close Contact
Sheridan	1	Unknown

Unified Command confirms 21 more recoveries in the Panhandle:

Recovered: 21	
County	Total
Box Butte	4
Dawes	7
Scotts Bluff	7
Sheridan	3

#### 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)
    - **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-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/ydxdx5mc>
- Morrill County Community Hospital in **Bridgeport**: Daily
  - Call 308-262-1616 for testing, same day results
- Contact your local hospital or clinic for information on testing access.

**March 2-September 8, 2020**

- **Total Tests Conducted: 12,047**
- **Positive: 711**
- **Cumulative Positivity Rate: 5.8%**
- **Recovered: 622**
- **Active Cases: 83**
- **Deaths: 6**
- **Active Hospitalizations: 8**
- **Total Cumulative Hospitalizations: 68**

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