



October 19, 2020

For immediate release

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

Panhandle risk dial moves further into orange: high risk of COVID spread

Panhandle total: 1,396; Active: 375; Recovered: 1,010; Deaths: 11

The overall Panhandle risk dial moved further into orange on the weekly Monday update equating to high risk of COVID spread. Additional Panhandle Counties also moved into orange, while three, Banner, Garden, and Grant, remain in yellow equating to moderate risk for COVID spread.

The Governor's Directed Health Measure will take effect on Wednesday, October 21 in an effort to preserve hospital capacity and slow the spread of COVID. This measure will remain enacted through November. The full details can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/y3al3afa>.

- **Elective Procedures/Surgeries**
 - In order to continue elective procedures, hospitals must maintain at least 10% of their staffed general and ICU beds as reserve capacity to treat COVID-19 patients.
 - Hospitals must continue to accept and treat COVID-19 patients and must not transfer COVID-19 patients to create capacity for elective procedures.
- **Bars & Restaurants**
 - Patrons will be required to be seated while on premise unless they are placing an order, using the restroom, or playing games.
 - 100% of rated occupancy continues.
 - Maximum of eight (8) individuals in a party (groups larger than eight (8) will need to split into multiple tables).
- **Gatherings**
 - INDOOR Gatherings will be limited to 50% of rated occupancy (not to exceed 10,000).
 - OUTDOOR Gatherings will remain at 100% of rated occupancy (not to exceed 10,000).
 - Gatherings include but are not limited to Indoor or Outdoor Arenas, Indoor or Outdoor Auctions, Stadiums, Tracks, Fairgrounds, Festivals, Zoos, Auditoriums, Large Event Conference Rooms, Meeting Halls, Indoor Theaters, Libraries, Swimming Pools, or any other confined indoor or outdoor space.
 - Groups shall be no larger than eight (8) individuals.
 - Plans for reopening or expanding to new capacity limits must be submitted to the local health departments and approved for all indoor and outdoor locations/venues that hold 500 or more individuals (1,000 or more in counties

over 500,000 population) before reopening is permitted. The reopening plan must contain planned number of guests, how the location will meet social distancing guidelines, and sanitation guidelines.

- **Wedding & Funeral Reception Venues**

- Maximum of eight (8) individuals in a party (groups larger than eight (8) will need to split into multiple tables).
- 100% of rated occupancy continues.
- Limited dances or other social events requiring guests to gather outside of their respective tables in guidance.

Here's what you can do to stay safe and stop the spread of COVID:

1. **Crowded Places:** Avoid gathering in groups where you can't maintain 6-foot distance from others.
2. **Close Contact:** Wear a mask or maintain 6-foot distance when you're with people you don't live with.
3. **Confined Spaces:** Avoid enclosed spaces with poor ventilation.

The Nebraska Strong Recovery Project would like to remind people to reach out for help during this stressful time, you are not alone. Free and confidential support is provided at the Nebraska Rural Response Hotline: 800-464-0258, National Disaster Distress Helpline: 800-985-5990, or Nebraska Family Helpline: 888-866-8660. A full brochure can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/y5bf8met>.

Unified Command confirms 160 more cases of COVID in the Panhandle since last reporting on Thursday, October 15. The investigations are underway, all close contacts will be quarantined.

Children 19 and under: 27		
County	Cases	Exposure Type
Box Butte	3	Close Contact
Box Butte	7	Community Spread
Box Butte	1	Unknown
Cheyenne	2	Close Contact
Cheyenne	1	Community Spread
Dawes	1	Close Contact
Dawes	1	Community Spread
Scotts Bluff	3	Close Contact
Scotts Bluff	3	Community Spread
Sheridan	2	Close Contact
Sheridan	1	Community Spread
Sheridan	2	Unknown

Adults: 133		
County	Cases	Exposure Type

Box Butte	4	Close Contact
Box Butte	13	Community Spread
Box Butte	2	Unknown
Cheyenne	1	Close Contact
Cheyenne	6	Community Spread
Dawes	2	Close Contact
Dawes	9	Community Spread
Dawes	1	Travel
Dawes	2	Unknown
Deuel	2	Close Contact
Garden	1	Close Contact
Garden	4	Community Spread
Grant	1	Close Contact
Kimball	1	Close Contact
Kimball	4	Community Spread
Morrill	3	Close Contact
Morrill	2	Community Spread
Scotts Bluff	18	Close Contact
Scotts Bluff	29	Community Spread
Scotts Bluff	9	Unknown
Sheridan	6	Close Contact
Sheridan	9	Community Spread
Sheridan	3	Unknown
Sioux	1	Close Contact

Unified Command confirms 59 more recoveries in the Panhandle.

Recovered: 59	
County	Total
Box Butte	15
Cheyenne	7
Dawes	15
Deuel	1
Garden	1
Kimball	3
Morrill	1
Sheridan	14
Sioux	2

Testing information and access for the Panhandle area:

- You can sign up for the following free testing at 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**: Mondays & Fridays, Noon-4pm; Wednesdays, 2-6pm
 - **Sidney** Regional Medical Center: Tuesdays & Thursday, 7-9am
- Community Action Health Center in **Gering**: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays, 7-8am
 - Testing is free, sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/yydxr5mc>
- Alliance Community Pharmacy in **Alliance**: Monday-Friday, 7:30am-6pm; Saturday-Sunday, 9am-5pm
 - For people experiencing symptoms, same day results. Call 308-629-1045 for appointment, fee is \$105.
- Morrill County Community Hospital in **Bridgeport**: Daily
 - Call 308-262-1616 for testing, same day results, insurance can be billed.
- Contact your local hospital or clinic for information on testing access.

March 2-October 19, 2020

- **Total Tests Conducted: 17,522**
- **Positive: 1,396**
- **Cumulative Positivity Rate: 7.9%**
- **Recovered: 1,010**
- **Active Cases: 375**
- **Deaths: 11**
- **Active Hospitalizations: 20**
- **Total Cumulative Hospitalizations: 124**

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.