



November 17, 2021

For immediate release

For more information, contact: Kim Engel, Director, 308-760-2415, [kengel@pphd.org](mailto:kengel@pphd.org)

### **Sidney hospital CEO shares current hospitalization and transfer experiences for patients given the fall COVID wave in the area**

Jason Petik, CEO of Sidney Regional Medical Center (SRMC) based in Sidney, Nebraska, joined the November 17 briefing to discuss what hospital care and patient needs have looked like for them with the fall Panhandle COVID wave.

Petik began with sharing while the numbers have slowly declined, two to three weeks ago, this was a different story. Before the current surge, they were seeing one to two COVID patients in the hospital at a time. With the surge, COVID patients increased to about eight but it has gone down in recent days back to pre-surge numbers.

“The other side is all of the hospitals in the Panhandle being able to expedite people to a higher level of care outside of the area. Colorado hospitals are currently in crisis care mode, that changes the ballgame quite a bit,” Petik explained.

SRMC was unable to transfer people out for quite some time but was fortunate in the last couple of days to transfer two to three patients for care in Colorado. Concerningly, just last week the closest hospital they could send someone needing immediate surgical care was an air flight to Kansas City.

“That tells you how far we had to send people to find beds that could take care of patients needing a higher level of care. It fluctuates. We see a continuous drop and surge. After the holidays, will likely see an uptick,” said Petik.

When asked about the length of time western Nebraska has been experiencing issues with transferring people out of the area, Petik estimated they have been enduring challenging transfers to higher levels of care for almost three weeks. This includes not only here in the Panhandle but to Colorado as well.

As the eastern part of the state and the front range of Colorado ramped up with COVID cases, those healthcare facilities became more and more taxed. They were having the challenge hit them first before it hit the Panhandle, and when it hit the area, they were already in the midst

of it. This is where it became a problem with being able to accept patients. They simply did not have anywhere to take folks.

“What it comes down to is whether or not someone may live or die if you are not able to transfer that person out and you do not have the level of care or services available for someone, say an extensive stroke or heart attack. We don’t have a cardiac lab, we can’t do catheterization for heart services. If that is what that person needs, their outcome is going to be significantly less than it was if we could transfer them out,” Petik concluded.

The Panhandle has trended differently than other parts of the state for COVID cases and while we are seeing a current decline, people are urged to help out our health systems by getting vaccinated.

Vaccinations have protection against all known variants, including Delta. For anyone age 5 and older, please get vaccinated. COVID vaccine is widely available across the Panhandle and there is no charge for the vaccine.

- **Box Butte/Grant:** <https://tinyurl.com/25mwaapu> | [safeway.com](https://www.safeway.com)
  - *Walk-ins welcome*
  - Dave's Pharmacy Hemingford & Alliance, Monday-Friday, 8 AM - 5:30 PM (Pfizer 2 PM- 5:30 PM)
  - Alliance Community Pharmacy, Monday-Friday, 7:30 AM - 6 PM
- **Cheyenne/Deuel:** <https://tinyurl.com/5b5uac8p> | [walmart.com](https://www.walmart.com) | [safeway.com](https://www.safeway.com)
  - *Walk-ins welcome*
  - During COVID clinic hours visit <https://tinyurl.com/5b5uac8p> for days and hours
- **Dawes/Sioux:** <https://tinyurl.com/x5d5nnbn> | [walmart.com](https://www.walmart.com) | [safeway.com](https://www.safeway.com)
  - *Walk-ins welcome*
  - Western Community Health Resources, Monday-Friday, 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM
- **Garden: To schedule an appointment visit [vaccinate.ne.gov](https://www.vaccinate.ne.gov) - provider will call you**
  - *Walk-ins welcome*
  - Regional West Garden County Clinic Front Desk, Monday-Friday, 8 AM - 5 PM
- **Kimball:** <https://tinyurl.com/d2u8txrs>
  - *Walk-ins welcome*
  - Kimball Health Services, Monday-Friday, 8 AM - 4:30 PM
- **Morrill:** <https://tinyurl.com/sb8mvumm>
  - *Walk-ins welcome*
  - Morrill County Hospital Clinic, Wednesdays, 8 AM - 4 PM
- **Sheridan:** <https://tinyurl.com/cvrmkv38>
  - *Walk-ins welcome*
  - Gordon Rural Health Clinic, Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM- 9:30 AM
- **Scotts Bluff/Banner:** <https://tinyurl.com/hkw7wk2p> | [walmart.com](https://www.walmart.com) | [safeway.com](https://www.safeway.com) | [walgreens.com](https://www.walgreens.com)
  - *Walk-ins welcome*
  - Gering CAPWN Health Center, Monday-Friday, 9 AM-12 PM & 1 PM-4 PM

- Scottsbluff County Immunization Clinic, Monday-Friday, 9:30 AM-5:30 PM

If you are homebound or have a condition that makes it hard for you to access a COVID vaccine, Call Vianey Zitterkopf, RN at 308-430-8390 or Janet Felix, LPN at 308-672-4653.

People who are fully COVID vaccinated will not be required to quarantine due to close contact. If you have lost your COVID vaccine card, go to <https://tinyurl.com/2zh7uhhu>.

Unified Command confirms 245 more cases of COVID in the Panhandle.

<b>All Ages: 245</b>	
<b>Region</b>	<b>Cases</b>
Banner	2
Box Butte	20
Cheyenne	25
Dawes	8
Deuel	2
Garden	1
Grant	1
Kimball	9
Morrill	25
Scotts Bluff	139
Sheridan	13
Sioux	0

**March 2, 2020-November 17, 2021**

- **Positive: 13,971**
- **Last week's cases: (cases/100,000): 284.0**
- **Last 7 day cases: 245**
- **Last week's positivity rate: 9.3%**
- **Deaths: 232**
- **Deaths Pending Verification: 14**
- **Active Hospitalizations: 28**
- **Total Cumulative Hospitalizations: 731**

Current COVID testing access can be found at <http://pphd.org/COVID-19.html>.

The Panhandle COVID dashboard is available at [www.pphd.org](http://www.pphd.org). The state COVID dashboard is available at <https://tinyurl.com/ufi9fcuf>. 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).