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For immediate release

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## **Twelve COVID-related deaths in the Panhandle reported, Panhandle total deaths 79 Quarantine requirements now provide two additional options**

Twelve additional COVID-related deaths in the Panhandle are being reported. This brings the total deaths in the Panhandle to 79. The deaths are being announced as follows:

### **Box Butte County**

- One female in her 50s

### **Dawes County**

- Two females: one in her 80s & one in her 90s
- One male in his 90s

### **Cheyenne County**

- One female in her 70s

### **Scotts Bluff County**

- Five males: three in their 60s & two in their 90s
- One female in her 90s

### **Sheridan County**

- One female in her 60s

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

Changes have been made on the quarantine requirements allowing two additional options.

The Governor’s Directed Health Measure determines and establishes the quarantine options in Nebraska. A 14-day quarantine timeframe is still recommended due to the incubation period of COVID (2-14 days).

The following options may be chosen for close contacts:

- On day 10 without testing and no symptoms
  - With this strategy, transmission risk is estimated at 1%-10%.
- On day 7 after receiving a negative test and no symptoms
  - Testing may be collected within 48 hours before the 7<sup>th</sup> day.
  - Quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than day 7.
  - With this strategy, transmission risk is estimated at 5%-12%.

If either of these options are chosen, symptom monitoring and masking through the full 14 days is still required.

Unified Command confirms 283 more cases of COVID in the Panhandle since last reporting on Monday, November 30. Recoveries are available on the Panhandle dashboard at [www.pphd.org](http://www.pphd.org). The investigations are underway, all close contacts will be quarantined.

<b>All Ages: 283</b>	
<b>County</b>	<b>Cases</b>
Banner	0
Box Butte	25
Cheyenne	34
Dawes	9
Deuel	9
Garden	5
Grant	2
Kimball	23
Morrill	15
Scotts Bluff	155
Sheridan	4
Sioux	1
Under Investigation	1

<b>Exposure Type</b>	
Community	28%
Close Contact	26%
Travel	0%
Under Investigation	46%

#### **March 2-December 3, 2020**

- **Total Tests Conducted: 27,015**
- **Positive: 6,272**
- **Recovered: 3,958**
- **Active Cases: 2,235**
- **Weekly Positivity Rate: 43.8%**
- **Deaths: 79**
- **Active Hospitalizations: 66**
- **Total Cumulative Hospitalizations: 395**
- **Last week's cases: 541**
- **Doubling time (November 4-December 2): 29 days**

#### **Avoid the Three Cs:**

- **Avoid Crowded Places** – Avoid gathering in groups where you cannot maintain 6-foot of distance from others

- Avoid Close Contact – Wear a mask over your nose and mouth or maintain 6-foot 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

#### 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
    - 212 East 24th Street
  - **Chadron** Community Hospital: Mondays & Fridays, 7-9am
    - 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, Wednesdays, & Fridays: Noon-3pm; Call 308-630-2100 for other testing opportunities for symptomatic patients.
  - **Sidney** Regional Medical Center: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays, 7-9:30am
- 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 \$125.
- 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.

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.

The Panhandle COVID dashboard is updated weekdays at 4:30 pm MT and available at [www.pphd.org](http://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 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).