



July 1, 2020

For immediate release

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**Panhandle Public Health District wishes you and yours a safe and happy Independence Day  
Nine more cases announced; Panhandle total: 312, Active: 111, Recovered: 198, Deaths: 3**

Independence Day has been an official holiday in the United States since Congress declared it a federal holiday in 1870. Panhandle residents will barbecue, camp, fish, swim, watch fireworks, and more to celebrate our nation's independence. With decreased restrictions in effect, public health urges Panhandle residents to enjoy the holiday safely and to continue the following COVID-19 safety precautions when celebrating:

- Stay at least six feet away from others. Exposure is considered less than six feet for 15 minutes or more. Social distancing is one of the best prevention strategies we have against this virus.
- Wear a mask when social distancing is not possible or when in public spaces or areas.
- Frequent handwashing or sanitizing is critical.
- Monitor your symptoms and immediately call your doctor, clinic, or our 24/7 line at 308-262-5764 before going anywhere if you are experiencing any of the following: cough, fever, shortness of breath, sore throat, body chills, headache, loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Please use extra caution if you are over 60 or have any underlying health conditions.

The National Safety Council recommends leaving the fireworks to the professionals and not using them at home due to the high risk of injury. But if fireworks are a part of your celebration, please ensure that you are following these safety measures:

- Never allow young children to handle fireworks
- Older children should use them only under close adult supervision
- Never use fireworks while impaired by drugs or alcohol
- Anyone using fireworks or standing nearby should wear protective eyewear
- Never hold lighted fireworks in your hands
- Never light them indoors
- Only use them away from people, houses, and flammable material
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person
- Only light one device at a time and maintain a safe distance after lighting

- Never ignite devices in a container
- Do not try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks
- Soak both spent and unused fireworks in water for a few hours before discarding
- Keep a bucket of water nearby to fully extinguish fireworks that don't go off or in case of fire
- Never use illegal fireworks

**Testing opportunities for the week of July 6:**

- Chadron Community Hospital: Mondays & Fridays, 7-9am
  - [Testnebraska.com](http://Testnebraska.com)
- Community Action Health Center in Gering: Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays, 7-8am
  - <https://tinyurl.com/y7msahzq>
- Morrill County Community Hospital: Daily
  - Call for testing, insurance will be billed
- Contact your local hospital or clinic for information on testing access.

Unified Command confirms nine more cases of COVID-19 in the Panhandle:

County	Demographics	Exposure Type
Banner	Male in his 50s	Community Spread
Dawes	Female in her 50s	Close Contact
Dawes	Male in his 20s	Travel-related
Morrill	Female in her 20s	Community Spread
Morrill	Male in his 40s	Close Contact
Morrill	Male in his 50s	Close Contact
Scotts Bluff	Female in her 60s	Community Spread
Scotts Bluff	Male in his teens	Close Contact
Sheridan	Female in her 50s	Close Contact

Close contact and exposure are defined as at least 15 minutes, less than six feet apart. There are no community exposure sites identified. The investigations are complete, all close contacts will be quarantined and actively monitored twice daily for fever and respiratory symptoms by public health officials.

Twelve new recoveries have been announced, two in Cheyenne County, four in Sioux County, and six in Scotts Bluff County, bringing the total recoveries to 198.

**March 2-July 1, 2020**

**Total Tests Conducted: 5,400**

**Positive: 312**

**Cumulative Positivity Rate: 5.6%**

**Recovered: 198**

**Active Cases: 111**

**Active Hospitalizations: 2**

**Total Cumulative Hospitalizations: 33**

**Deaths: 3**

- **Banner County: 2 case (1 active, 1 recovered)**
- **Box Butte County: 3 cases (recovered)**
- **Cheyenne County: 20 cases (5 active, 15 recovered)**
- **Dawes County: 4 cases (2 active, 2 recovered)**
- **Garden County: 4 cases (recovered)**
- **Kimball County: 12 cases (2 active, 10 recovered)**
- **Morrill County: 41 cases (27 active, 14 recovered)**
- **Scotts Bluff County: 215 cases (69 active, 143 recovered, 3 deaths)**
- **Sheridan County: 5 cases (active)**
- **Sioux County: 6 cases (recovered)**

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).