



August 5, 2020

For immediate release

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

Quarantining close contacts is key to reducing the spread of COVID-19

Panhandle total: 447, Active: 43, Recovered: 398, Deaths: 6

Quarantining close contacts is key to reducing the spread of COVID-19 and is mandatory. Not abiding by self-quarantine or self-isolation requirements by health officials is enforceable as a misdemeanor offense per the Governor’s Directed Health Measure.

Public Health provides education and guidance and has a process in place to engage law enforcement if needed. To date we have been able to handle all situations with education from public health and/or law enforcement.

Close contact = a person that is less than six feet for 15 minutes or more with a person that is positive for COVID-19. People considered a **close contact** in the disease investigation will be told by health officials to self-quarantine for 14 days and go get tested if they begin experiencing symptoms. This helps stop the spread.

Self-quarantine – confirmed as a close contact and must stay home and monitor for symptoms for 14 days since the last exposure to prevent the spread. If symptoms appear, get tested.

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

Children 19 and under: 0

Adults: 3		
County	Cases	Exposure Type
Scotts Bluff	1	Community Spread
Scotts Bluff	1	Close Contact
Scotts Bluff	1	Unknown

The investigations are underway, all close contacts will be quarantined and actively monitored for symptoms by public health officials.

Unified Command confirms fourteen more recoveries in the Panhandle:

Recovered: 14	
County	Total
Dawes	4
Morrill	3
Scotts Bluff	7

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
 - **Chadron** Community Hospital: Mondays & Fridays, 7-9am
 - Collections are at 821 Morehead Street (Old Hospital ER Entrance next to Wilson Park)
 - **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/y7msahzq>
- Morrill County Community Hospital in **Bridgeport**: Daily
 - Call 308-262-1616 for testing, same day results, insurance will be billed
- Contact your local hospital or clinic for information on testing access.

March 2-August 5, 2020

- **Total Tests Conducted: 8,670**
- **Positive: 447**
- **Cumulative Positivity Rate: 5.2%**
- **Recovered: 398**
- **Active Cases: 43**
- **Deaths: 6**
- **Active Hospitalizations: 0**
- **Total Cumulative Hospitalizations: 45**

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.