



August 31, 2020

For immediate release

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Panhandle Unified Command addresses CDC statement on COVID death counts
Panhandle total: 634, Active: 76, Recovered: 552, Deaths: 6

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently made the following statement on their website: "For 6% of the deaths, COVID was the only cause mentioned." For the other 94% of people that died of COVID, "individuals had an average of 2.6 additional conditions or causes per death."

According to the CDC's website as of August 31, 182,622 US people have died from COVID. COVID is still the third leading cause of death in the US. The information the CDC shared does not change anything, it is how the deaths are being interpreted.

The CDC has consistently stated that individuals with underlying health conditions are more likely to die from COVID. This is one of the facts that public health was aware of since the beginning of the COVID pandemic.

60% of US adults have a chronic condition. Among those aged 65 and over, 80% have multiple chronic conditions. Minorities and low-income populations have more chronic conditions too. Many Americans have at least one chronic condition.

Death certificates have multiple lines and include the "immediate cause of death," "sequentially conditions leading to the cause of death," and "other significant conditions contributing to death." It would be unusual that a chronic condition was not listed on a death certificate in the US given the health of our nation overall and how COVID impacts every organ system.

Unified Command confirms 11 more cases of COVID in the Panhandle since last reporting on Friday, August 28. The investigations are underway, all close contacts will be quarantined and actively monitored for symptoms by public health officials.

Children 19 and under: 2		
County	Cases	Exposure Type
Scotts Bluff	2	Community Spread

Adults: 9

County	Cases	Exposure Type
Box Butte	2	Community Spread
Dawes	1	Community Spread
Dawes	2	Unknown
Garden	1	Close Contact
Scotts Bluff	2	Close Contact
Sheridan	1	Community Spread

Unified Command confirms 30 more recoveries in the Panhandle:

Recovered: 30	
County	Total
Dawes	15
Deuel	1
Garden	1
Morrill	2
Scotts Bluff	8
Sheridan	3

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
 - 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**: 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/yydxr5mc>
- Morrill County Community Hospital in **Bridgeport**: Daily
 - Call 308-262-1616 for testing, same day results
- Contact your local hospital or clinic for information on testing access.

March 2-August 31, 2020

- **Total Tests Conducted: 11,258**

- **Positive: 634**
- **Cumulative Positivity Rate: 5.6%**
- **Recovered: 552**
- **Active Cases: 76**
- **Deaths: 6**
- **Active Hospitalizations: 8**
- **Total Cumulative Hospitalizations: 63**

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.