



October 5, 2020

For immediate release

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

**Box Butte County first county to move into orange on the Panhandle risk dial, residents urged to monitor for symptoms and take critical safety precautions**  
**Panhandle total: 967, Active: 116, Recovered: 842, Deaths: 9**

As the Panhandle continues to see increasing case counts, today’s risk dial update shows Box Butte County as the first county moving into orange. This is due to the surge in cases in the county over the past three weeks and means the county has high risk of COVID spread.

**Health officials urge all Box Butte County residents to monitor for symptoms and get tested if you or anyone in your family begins experiencing symptoms.** Please continue all of the important precautions to protect you, your loved ones, and your community from the spread of COVID. Wear a mask when possible, stay at least six feet away from others, monitor for any symptoms, and stay home if you are not feeling well. Please practice these safety tips out of an abundance of kindness and humility for others.

Additional guidance for when at work and in social settings and in public can be found at [www.pphd.org](http://www.pphd.org) by clicking on the Guidance tab on the risk dial, and scrolling to the COVID ORANGE guidance on page 3. School guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4uwhpgc>.

In the past two weeks, Box Butte County’s overall positivity rate has increased to be 21.8% according to Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Cases have increased weekly over the past three weeks and community spread of the virus remains high at more than 50% of cases. The vast majority of cases within Box Butte County are occurring in Alliance.

Unified Command confirms 51 more cases of COVID in the Panhandle since last reporting on Thursday, October 1. The investigations are underway, all close contacts will be quarantined and actively monitored for symptoms by public health officials.

Children 19 and under: 8		
County	Cases	Exposure Type
Box Butte	2	Close Contact
Cheyenne	1	Close Contact
Dawes	1	Community Spread

Scotts Bluff	2	Close Contact
Sheridan	1	Close Contact
Sheridan	1	Community Spread

Adults: 43		
County	Cases	Exposure Type
Box Butte	7	Close Contact
Box Butte	4	Community Spread
Cheyenne	1	Close Contact
Dawes	1	Close Contact
Dawes	4	Community Spread
Grant	1	Close Contact
Kimball	5	Community Spread
Scotts Bluff	3	Close Contact
Scotts Bluff	6	Community Spread
Scotts Bluff	1	Travel
Scotts Bluff	1	Unknown
Sheridan	5	Close Contact
Sheridan	4	Community Spread

Unified Command confirms 29 more recoveries in the Panhandle:

Recovered: 29	
County	Total
Box Butte	14
Cheyenne	3
Dawes	6
Kimball	1
Morrill	1
Scotts Bluff	3
Sheridan	1

**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**: Mondays & Fridays, Noon-4pm; Wednesdays, 2-6pm
      - **Sidney** Regional Medical Center: Tuesdays & Thursday, 7-9am
  - Community Action Health Center in **Gering**: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays, 7-8am
    - Testing is free, sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/yydxxr5mc>
  - 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-October 5, 2020**

- **Total Tests Conducted: 15,262**
- **Positive: 967**
- **Cumulative Positivity Rate: 6.3%**
- **Recovered: 842**
- **Active Cases: 116**
- **Deaths: 9**
- **Active Hospitalizations: 5**
- **Total Cumulative Hospitalizations: 88**

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).