



November 23, 2020

For immediate release

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

Safe opportunities to connect during the Thanksgiving holiday

Two additional COVID-related deaths are being reported in the Panhandle. A Cheyenne County female in her 70s and a Kimball County female in her 90s have both recently passed away. This brings the total deaths in the Panhandle to 49.

“We wish to express our sincerest condolences in the passing of two Panhandle residents. We send their friends and loved ones peace and comfort during their time of loss,” expressed Kim Engel, Panhandle Public Health District Director.

We understand people may be experiencing pandemic fatigue, but this is the year to be as safe as possible for your family, friends, loved ones, and our most vulnerable community members. It takes all of us to break the transmission cycle.

There will come a time when standard family get-togethers will be safe again but this isn't the time, unfortunately. Zoom is lifting its 40-minute time limit for free meetings on Thanksgiving. What a perfect way for people to connect via distance. It's important to remember that the act of staying apart is the act of love this year.

An activity we are encouraging people to do is to engage in a conversation with your friends and loved ones, safely via phone call, video chat, or social media, to share what each is grateful for and mindful of. People's mental health is just as critical as their physical health, we need people to feed that innate desire for connecting (safely, of course). Please be safe this Thanksgiving holiday.

- **Avoid the Three Cs:**
 - **Avoid Crowded Places** – Avoid gathering in groups where you cannot maintain 6-feet 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

Unified Command confirms 393 more cases of COVID in the Panhandle since last reporting on Thursday, November 19. Recoveries are available on the Panhandle dashboard at www.pphd.org. The investigations are underway, all close contacts will be quarantined.

All Ages: 393

County	Cases
Banner	0
Box Butte	35
Cheyenne	35
Dawes	22
Deuel	3
Garden	2
Grant	2
Kimball	6
Morrill	23
Scotts Bluff	245
Sheridan	17
Sioux	1
Under Investigation	2

Exposure Type

Community	24%
Close Contact	34%
Travel	0%
Under Investigation	41%

March 2-November 23, 2020

- Total Tests Conducted: 25,483
- Positive: 5,472
- Cumulative Positivity Rate: 21.4%
- Recovered: 2,930
- Active Cases: 2,493
- Deaths: 49
- Active Hospitalizations: 75
- Total Cumulative Hospitalizations: 355
- Hospital beds in the Panhandle with a COVID patient: 44%
- Last week's positivity rate: 42.6%
- Last week's cases: 743
- Doubling time (October 30-November 20): 21 days

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**: Monday & Wednesday, Noon-3pm; Tuesdays & Fridays, 1pm-4pm; 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. 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.