



December 17, 2020

For immediate release

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Stay informed on important vaccine updates, regularly updated Panhandle COVID vaccine FAQ can be found at www.pphd.org

We understand that some people may be nervous about the COVID vaccines – this is totally reasonable. Fortunately, researchers have been working on vaccines for the coronavirus family for years, so they did not have to start from scratch.

As researchers have been working intensely to develop and test the vaccine, they have been transparent in sharing data, holding live hearings, and pausing trials when it’s been important to slow down. All of this has given us trust and confidence in vaccination – a critical tool in our toolbox in slowing the spread of COVID and helping our communities move forward.

We have sacrificed so much this year to keep our loved ones and community safe. While we know getting vaccinated isn’t always comfortable, you can play a big role to support your community by keeping yourself and your family up-to-date on vaccinations. By staying updated on immunizations, we can make sure our sacrifice and efforts to fight COVID keep everyone safe.

Sixty percent of Americans indicate they intend to get vaccinated. It is estimated half of all Americans need to be vaccinated before seeing an impact and 75% to 85% of the population needs to be vaccinated to have blanket herd immunity. Herd immunity is achieved by protecting people from a virus, not exposing them to it.

Even with the vaccine nearing the horizon, please do not let your guard down on the important prevention strategies. Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others, stay at least 6 feet away from others, avoid crowds, and wash your hands often.

Unified Command confirms 215 more cases of COVID in the Panhandle since last reporting on Monday, December 14. Recoveries are available on the Panhandle dashboard at www.pphd.org. The investigations are underway, all close contacts will be quarantined.

All Ages: 215	
County	Cases
Banner	3
Box Butte	21

Cheyenne	23
Dawes	12
Deuel	6
Garden	2
Grant	2
Kimball	30
Morrill	9
Scotts Bluff	85
Sheridan	20
Sioux	1
Under investigation	1

Exposure Type	
Community	36%
Close Contact	40%
Travel	0%
Under Investigation	24%

March 2-December 17, 2020

- **Total Tests Conducted: 28,880**
- **Positive: 7,163**
- **Last 14 days cases: 764**
- **Last week cases: 438**
- **Last week's positivity rate: 42.5%**
- **Deaths: 97**
- **Active Hospitalizations: 36**
- **Total Cumulative Hospitalizations: 440**
- **Doubling time (November 6-December 16): 40 days**

Avoid the Three Cs:

- **Avoid Crowded Places** – Avoid gathering in groups where you cannot maintain 6-foot 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

Current COVID testing access can be found at www.pphd.org.

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, 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.

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.