

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19 Cases and Vaccinations Increasing

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) and their partners are seeing a spike in COVID-19 cases and in the number of people wanting to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Vaccination rates across the health district have reached 40%. This number includes fully vaccinated as well as partially vaccinated individuals. A partially vaccinated person is someone who has received one dose of the two-dose vaccine series.

To meet the increased demand, SWNPHD is planning to hold COVID vaccination clinics throughout the health district by utilizing three traveling teams. Each team will work with local partners to set up shot clinics and reach out to anyone wanting vaccine in their community. Businesses can also sign up to have one of these teams come to their location and offer COVID vaccinations on-site.

The traveling teams will be coordinated by Kay Schmidt, Emergency Response Coordinator for SWNPHD. She explained, “We want to make it convenient and increase access for those folks that are wanting to get vaccinated. We need to increase our resilience to the variants that are causing more cases, and boosting vaccination rates will get us closer to herd immunity.” Businesses and organizations interested in participating can contact SWNPHD at 308-345-4223.

Vaccination Rates in Southwest Nebraska

County	Population Taken from National Guard in 2020	Total Number Vaccinated by County	Percentage Partially and/or Fully Vaccinated
Chase	3924	1552	40%
Dundy	1693	594	35%
Frontier	2627	913	35%
Furnas	4676	2197	47%
Hayes	922	234	25%
Hitchcock	2762	919	33%
Keith	8034	3380	42%
Perkins	2891	1159	40%
Red Willow	10724	4363	41%
Total	38253	15311	40%

Data as of July 20, 2021

All three COVID vaccines approved for use in the United States provide protection against severe

illness, hospitalization, or death from COVID-19. All currently hospitalized cases of COVID-19 from the health district are unvaccinated individuals. After August 7th the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine will no longer be available. SWNPHD and local pharmacies and clinics will continue to give the Pfizer and Moderna COVID vaccines. Visit swhealth.ne.gov for information on where to find COVID vaccine.

“Even if you had COVID previously, you do not have an immunity to the new variants including the Delta variant. Vaccination is encouraged even if you previously had COVID,” states Melissa Propp, RN. “We are closely monitoring re-infections and health departments across the state are seeing people who had COVID in the fall now getting sick again 6-8 months later.”

SWNPHD is currently seeing outbreaks that include the Delta variant of COVID-19 in three counties: Dundy, Perkins, and Red Willow. Frontier County had an outbreak earlier in July.

SWNPHD had 56 new cases of COVID-19 reported from July 12 to July 26, 2021, bringing the weekly average from 6 to 28 cases per week. Seven of these cases were identified in an audit of previous case data from the fall peak. A breakout by county includes Chase County-0, Dundy County-9, Frontier County-3, Furnas County-9, Hayes County-1, Hitchcock County-1, Keith County-2, Perkins County-8, and Red Willow County-23, bringing the total number of cases to 3,956. Due to the Governor ending the emergency declaration for the state of Nebraska, case numbers cannot be reported by county starting July 31st.

SWNPHD strongly encourages using the recommended precautions of frequent handwashing, wearing a mask over your nose and mouth if you are not vaccinated, staying home if you are sick, and staying away from others that may be sick. Avoid enclosed crowded spaces or gatherings.

COVID-19 information can be found at swhealth.ne.gov. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th St (1 block north of Arby's) in McCook and can be reached by calling 308-345-4223.

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