

## NEWS RELEASE

January 17, 2023

For Immediate Release

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### COVID-19 Update for Southwest Nebraska

Thirty-nine cases of COVID-19 were recorded in Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) in the past week (Jan 2 – Jan 8). This is consistent with the average new weekly cases reported for the last two months. COVID test positivity rate is between 4% and 6%, but positivity rates have dropped dramatically in the past 2 months, dropping to about a third of the test positivity rate in mid-November.

The winter months have been severe for respiratory illnesses (affecting the lungs). There were high levels of RSV and flu across the health district, along with the continued presence of COVID-19 cases. SWNPHD received reports of deaths from all three of these illnesses in November and December of 2022: 2 deaths due to COVID-19, 2 deaths due to influenza (flu), and 1 death due to RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) in an adult.

“The tripledemic reached even us here in rural southwest Nebraska,” states Myra Stoney, Health Director at SWNPHD. “Thankfully we continue to see good protection from the flu shot and COVID shots. The chances of getting these illnesses are still there, but you are much less likely to need hospital care for severe illness if you have had a booster shot within the last 6 months.”

Updated boosters for COVID-19 are available at SWNPHD and many pharmacies across the area. 43% of all SWNPHD residents have received the minimum vaccination dose (1 or 2 shots). About 56% of these persons have received at least one booster dose, including 73% of those aged 60 years and over.

#### Monthly report Dec 1– Dec 31, 2022

The monthly report will look at COVID-19 cases in SWNPHD across different time periods, presenting graphs showing daily progress of cases and a weekly summary in conclusion

- The first table describes total COVID positive cases detected in the **past week (Jan 2 – Jan 8, 2023)** & the past month (**Dec 1 – Dec 31, 2022**) in Chase, Dundy, Hayes, Hitchcock, Frontier, Furnas, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. Positive results are described as bi-weekly and monthly **COVID cases/10,000 population**.
- The second table describes all COVID tests conducted in SWNPHD from **Jan 2 – Jan 8, 2023 (1 week)** & **Dec 1 – Dec 31, 2022 (1 month)**. We describe **total tests, positive cases and test positivity rate** by age and gender.
- The third table shows the **proportion of persons fully vaccinated** in SWNPHD. We define “fully vaccinated” as the proportion of persons who have received the minimum recommended dose (2 for Pfizer & Moderna; 1 for Janssen vaccines). Data is described by **county and age** category. Data current as of **Jan 8, 2023**.
- The first graph looks at the progress of the pandemic from **April 1, 2020 – Jan 8, 2023**, across all 9 counties in SWNPHD. We describe the **daily COVID positive case rate (7-day rolling**

**average**<sup>1)</sup> across SWNPHD<sup>2)</sup>. The second graph describes the **same data**, dividing the population by **10-year age categories**.

- The third graph describes **daily COVID tests** in SWNPHD from **April 17, 2020 – Jan 8, 2023** further divided as **positive** or **negative**. The graph also describes the average **test positivity rate (7-day rolling average)**<sup>3)</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> 7-day rolling average refers to the sum of the cases reported on that day and the preceding 6 days divided by 7. This number is presented for each day to ‘smooth out’ the line for cases.

<sup>2</sup> (7-day rolling average) test positivity rate = (Sum of positive results for preceding 7 days) / (Sum of all tests conducted in the preceding 7 days)

<sup>3</sup> (7-day rolling average) test positivity rate = (Sum of positive results for preceding 7 days) / (Sum of all tests conducted in the preceding 7 days)

The table below describes COVID positives/10,000 population and the positivity rate for the **past week (Jan 2 – Jan 8, 2023)** & the past month (**Dec 1 – Dec 31, 2022**)

	Total Population	Jan 2 – Jan 8 (1 week)		Dec 1 – Dec 31 (1 month).	
		Positive cases/10,000 population	Test Positivity rate	Positive cases/10,000 population	Test Positivity rate
Chase	3,734	8.0	10.3%	16.1	5.2%
Dundy	2,023	44.5	5.1%	123.6	3.8%
Frontier	2,609	0.0	0.0%	23.0	8.6%
Furnas	4,786	25.1	22.6%	58.5	14.6%
Hayes	943	0.0	0.0%	10.6	2.8%
Hitchcock	2,843	0.0	0.0%	24.6	2.1%
Keith	8,099	4.9	12.5%	29.6	13.5%
Perkins	2,907	0.0	0.0%	13.8	15.4%
Red Willow	10,806	10.2	14.3%	60.2	15.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>38,750</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>42.8</b>	<b>8.2%</b>

The table below describes COVID tests conducted, positives and the positivity rate by age and gender for the **past week (Jan 2 – Jan 8, 2023)** & the past month (**Dec 1 – Dec 31, 2022**)

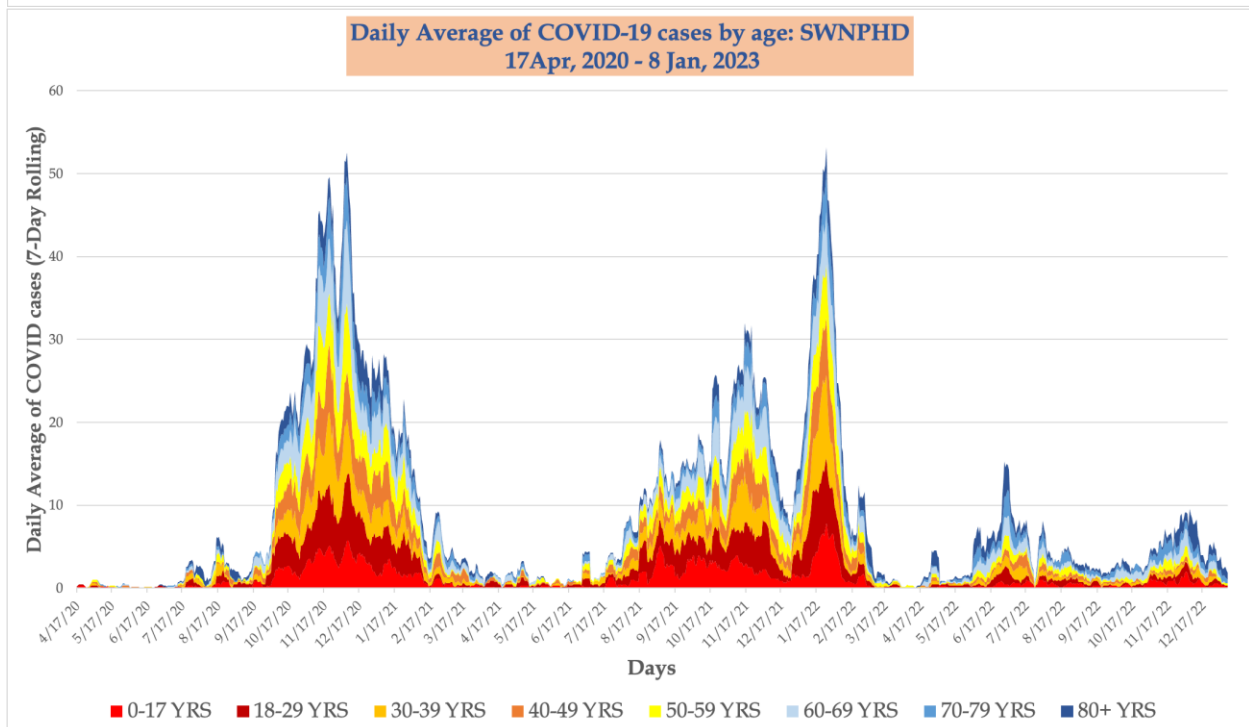
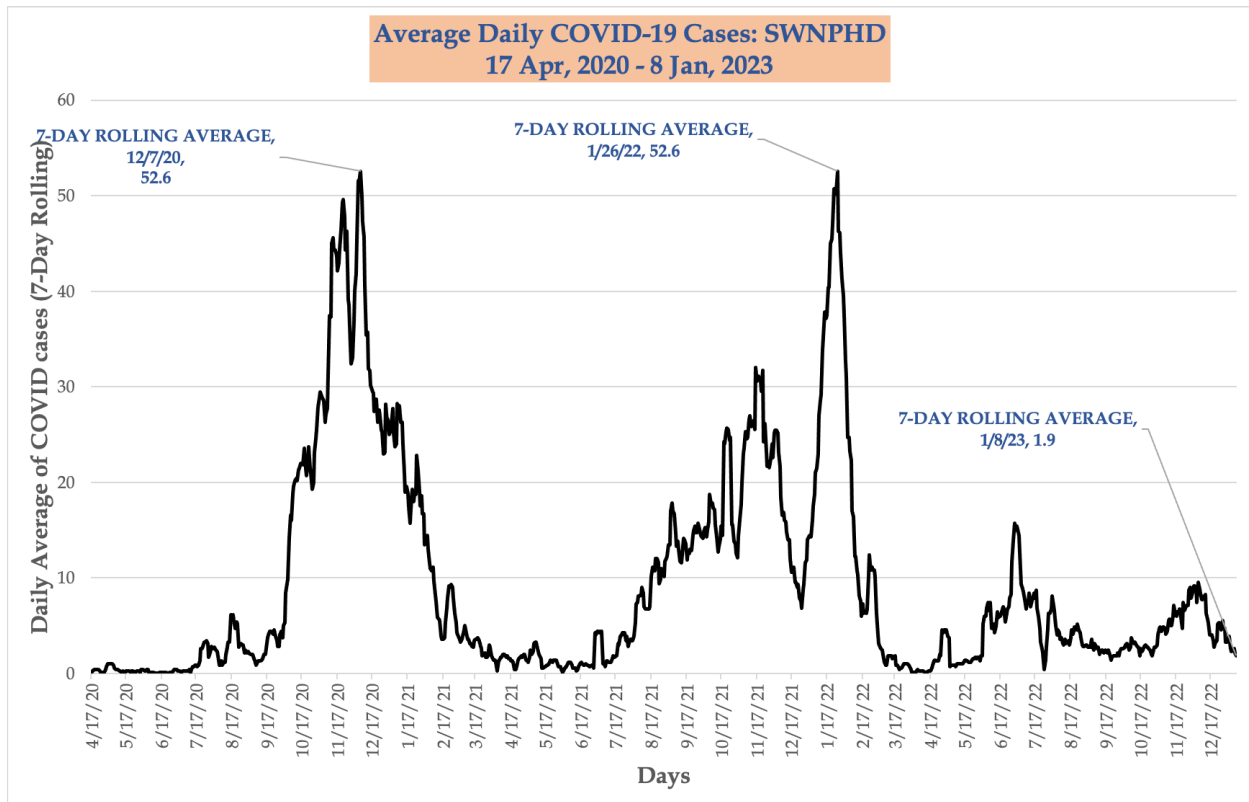
Age (in yrs)	Jan 2 – Jan 8 (1 week)			Dec 1 – Dec 31 (1 month).		
	Tests	Positive cases	Test Positivity rate	Tests	Positive cases	Test Positivity rate
0-17	44	3	6.8%	206	18	8.7%
18-29	48	4	8.3%	201	14	7.0%
30-39	36	3	8.3%	174	14	8.0%
40-49	53	3	5.7%	230	11	4.8%
50-59	73	4	5.5%	304	12	3.9%
60-69	73	7	9.6%	281	24	8.5%
70-79	54	6	11.1%	247	26	10.5%
80-89	83	9	10.8%	379	47	12.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>2,022</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>8.2%</b>
<b>Gender</b>						
Female	341	28	8.2%	1,492	114	7.6%
Male	122	10	8.2%	527	51	9.7%
Missing/ did not disclose	1	1	0.0%	3	1	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>2,022</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>8.2%</b>

- Details of vaccination rates by age in each of the nine counties in Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department is shown below. The legend for color codes is also displayed. Percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole number. Vaccines are currently available to all eligible residents aged 5 years and over.
- Only 1<sup>st</sup> (Janssen) & 2<sup>nd</sup> (Moderna & Johnson & Johnson) doses (Moderna & Johnson & Johnson) have been considered, booster doses have not been counted to calculate the “completely vaccinated” rate. Data spans the period from **15 Dec, 2020 – 8 Jan, 2023**.

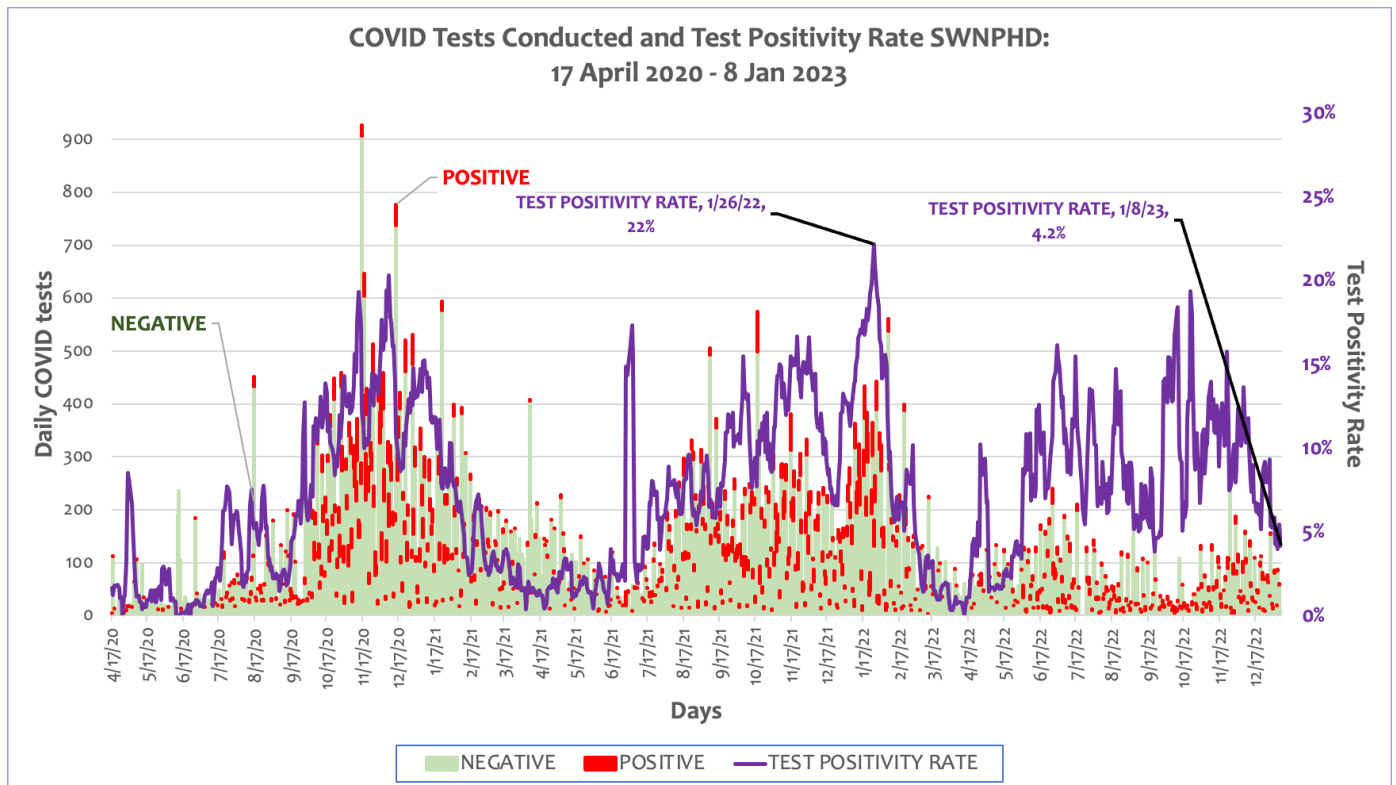
	0-19 YRS	20-34 YRS	35-44 YRS	45-54 YRS	55-64 YRS	65-74 YRS	75-84 YRS	85+ YRS	ALL AGES
<b>Chase</b>	12%	35%	39%	46%	50%	82%	76%	71%	43%
<b>Dundy</b>	8%	21%	22%	34%	42%	68%	101%	41%	31%
<b>Frontier</b>	8%	29%	38%	43%	51%	63%	57%	94%	38%
<b>Furnas</b>	17%	42%	50%	51%	62%	84%	90%	76%	51%
<b>Hayes</b>	10%	23%	37%	18%	29%	78%	52%	43%	30%
<b>Hitchcock</b>	8%	23%	36%	36%	47%	76%	51%	64%	36%
<b>Keith</b>	15%	38%	44%	43%	61%	65%	68%	85%	46%
<b>Perkins</b>	10%	32%	41%	47%	53%	74%	81%	51%	41%
<b>Red Willow</b>	12%	35%	46%	45%	59%	94%	68%	85%	44%
<b>SWNPHD</b>	12%	34%	42%	44%	55%	77%	70%	74%	43%

0% - 24%	Less than 1/4th received 1 or 2 dose as recommended
25% - 49%	1/4ths to 1/2 received 1 or 2 dose as recommended
50%- 74%	1/2 to 3/4ths received 1 or 2 dose as recommended
75% & higher	Over 3/4ths received 1 or 2 dose as recommended

- The first graph below describes the **average daily number of new cases** across all 9 counties of Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department from 17 Apr 2020 – 8 Jan 2023. Daily average is depicted by the 7-day rolling average of cases.
- The second graph describes daily average of cases by age. Graph width represents average number of new COVID cases for the previous 7 days, and individual colors describe age
- In general, blue = 65+ years, Yellow & Orange = 35-64 year olds, Red = Less than 35 year olds.



- The graphs below describe the **daily COVID tests** in SWNPHD from **April 17, 2020 – Jan 8, 2023** further divided as **positive** or **negative**.
- The graph also describes the average **test positivity rate (7-day rolling average)**<sup>4</sup> The graph depicts the entire district of Chase, Dundy, Furnas, Frontier, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. **Test Positivity Rate in SWNPHD from 2 Jan – 8 Jan, 2023 is 4.2%**
- The height of the bar graph represents the total tests conducted on that day.
- The running line graph tracks 7-day positivity rate among all COVID tests in the last 28 months.
- Scale is different for the bar and line graph – see both axes



<sup>4</sup> (7-day rolling average) test positivity rate = (Sum of positive results for preceding 7 days) / (Sum of all tests conducted in the preceding 7 days)

SWNPHD encourages residents to look for health information from reliable sources. For questions regarding COVID-19 shots or other vaccinations, you can talk to your healthcare provider, contact the public health nurse, or your local librarian can assist you in finding well-researched information.

# HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS

**CONSIDER THE SOURCE**  
Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.

**READ BEYOND**  
Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?

**CHECK THE AUTHOR**  
Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?

**SUPPORTING SOURCES?**  
Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.

**CHECK THE DATE**  
Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.

**IS IT A JOKE?**  
If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.

**CHECK YOUR BIASES**  
Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.

**ASK THE EXPERTS**  
Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.

**IFLA**  
International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow us on Facebook and Instagram or view the website at [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov) which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. Call (308) 345-4223; one number three locations, McCook, Imperial, and Ogallala.

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