

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACTS

Leah Bucco-White, Communications, 402-309-4157

leah.bucco-white@nebraska.gov

Khalilah LeGrand, Communications, 402-853-1320

khalilah.legrand@nebraska.gov

Fourth COVID-19 Death Reported in State Community transmission identified in Adams and Buffalo Counties

LINCOLN – The fourth death related to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was reported to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) today. The person was a Buffalo County resident in his 90s - <https://www.trphd.org/>.

“We are saddened by the death of another fellow Nebraskan,” said Dr. Gary Anthonie, Chief Medical Officer and Director of Public Health for DHHS. “Staying home if you’re sick and distancing yourself from others are actions we must continue to take to help protect those around us who may be more vulnerable to severe illness or death.”

Community transmission was identified in Adams and Buffalo Counties. Community transmission is when people have COVID-19 but public health officials are unable to identify how or where they became infected

- <https://southheartlandhealth.org/> and <https://www.trphd.org/>.

State Directed Health Measures (DHMs) were issued tonight for the following 11 counties: Adams, Clay, Nuckolls, Webster, Buffalo, Dawson, Franklin, Gosper, Harlan, Kearney, and Phelps counties - <https://www.dropbox.com/s/k5n7bns767cydna/DHM%203.31.2020.pdf?dl=0>.

The quarantine measures included in the State DHMs are for individuals who are COVID-19 positive or develop fever, sudden onset of a dry cough, or sudden onset of shortness of breath without provocation (such as walking up stairs, running, choking, etc.). This excludes those with seasonal allergies, COPD, or other diagnoses that may produce respiratory symptoms. Additionally, the directive doesn’t apply to patients who have an alternative non-COVID-19 diagnosis from a healthcare provider. These patients should follow the treatment and guidance provided by their healthcare provider for such conditions.

Tonight’s state case total is 177. DHHS launched a new data dashboard that provides daily updates to the state’s COVID-19 case totals. You can find it at <http://dhhs.ne.gov/coronavirus>.

Certain people are at higher risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 including older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes and lung disease. People in these higher-risk groups should:

- [Stock up on supplies](#), including extra necessary medications.
- Take [everyday precautions](#) to keep space between yourself and others.
- When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often.
- [Avoid crowds](#) as much as possible.
- Avoid [cruise travel](#) and non-essential air travel.

- If there is a COVID-19 outbreak in your community, [stay home](#) as much as possible to further reduce your risk of being exposed.

Recent data shows that the virus is also affecting younger people. A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report said 20% of those hospitalized for COVID-19 in the U.S. were 20-44 years old.

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, fatigue, and shortness of breath or difficulty breathing. People who are concerned they may have COVID-19 should self-isolate and call ahead to their primary care provider to be screened over the phone.

Everyone can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections by:

- Avoiding close contact with sick people and staying home if you are sick.
- Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Here's where to find tools and resources for individuals and families, schools, communities, businesses, healthcare facilities, and first responders on the DHHS website - <http://dhhs.ne.gov/coronavirus> and CDC's website - <https://www.cdc.gov/covid19>.

DHHS opened a statewide COVID-19 information line to help answer general questions and share the latest information and resources with Nebraskans to help keep them informed. The number is (402) 552-6645; hours of operation are 8 a.m.-8 p.m. CST, 7 days a week.

DHHS will continue to update Nebraskans through the DHHS website and on Facebook and Twitter as we have new information. The CDC's website is also a good resource for COVID-19 information - <https://www.cdc.gov/covid19>.