

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Trends of COVID-19 Cases in Southwest Nebraska

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has 32 new cases of COVID-19 reported September 21st to September 28th at noon. A breakout by county includes: Chase – 3; Frontier – 1; Furnas – 2; Keith – 3; Perkins – 1; Red Willow – 22, and no cases this week reported in Dundy, Hayes and Hitchcock counties. This brings the totals for the health district to 226 cases with 170 cases recovered. One additional death was confirmed this week as well.

A number by county does not identify the actual number of cases of COVID-19. There are those who have chosen not to test, were tested too early or have no symptoms. The preventive actions and behaviors that help you to stay safe should not change based on only one piece of information.

The first case of COVID-19 in SWNPHD was reported on April 15th in Red Willow County. A total of 19 cases were reported to the health department from April 15th until the end of May. Six additional cases were reported in June up to July 5th. Following the July 4th holiday weekend until Labor Day, the health district reported 137 cases with an additional 50 cases since Labor Day weekend.

Many of these recent cases are related to athletic events or family gatherings and are the result of direct contact to a positive case. While many argue the science of masking, SWNPHD's investigations show that masking works. SWNPHD continues to recommend that even small gatherings take precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including keeping guests 6 feet apart, washing hands and surfaces often, wearing a mask indoors, and asking anyone experiencing symptoms to stay at home.

The COVID-19 Community Risk Dial for the week of September 28th is yellow, meaning residents of southwest Nebraska have a moderate risk of contracting COVID-19. This risk level is based on several factors, including access to testing, healthcare capacity, and types of exposure. Testing for COVID-19 is widely available, through healthcare providers and TestNebraska events. Hospital capacity across the state is sufficient to meet the current need. Most of the positive cases in SWNPHD are related to direct contact or travel, with minimal community spread.

COVID-19 information is available at [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) and [swhealth.ne.gov](https://www.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.