

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First COVID-19 Cases Found in Three Nebraska Counties

First cases of COVID-19 reported in Box Butte, Wayne and Pierce Counties

Lincoln – Three counties reported new cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) were reported to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) on Saturday.

The Panhandle Public Health District reported Box Butte County's first case of COVID-19. The Box Butte County case is a female in her 70s who has been isolating in her home since April 3. This case is travel-

related. <http://www.pphd.org/Site/Documents/NewsReleases/COVID-19%20Positive%20test%20results%2004.11.2020%20Scotts%20Bluff%20&%20Box%20Butte%20County.pdf>

The Northeast Nebraska Public Health District reported Wayne County's first case of COVID-19, a male in his 70s who has been isolating at home since before symptoms started.<https://www.facebook.com/nnphd/photos/a.1329229240478436/2868190959915582/?type=3&theater>

The Northeast Nebraska Public Health District also reported a first case in Pierce County.<https://www.facebook.com/NCDHD/>

The Loup Basin Public Health Department (LBPHD) confirmed nine additional cases at a long-term care facility in Custer County. The cases are all related. <https://www.facebook.com/lbphd.org/>

A resident of the Central Nebraska Veterans' Home (CN VH) in Kearney has tested positive for COVID-19.

Tonight's state case total, as of 6:00 pm Central Daylight Time, is 704. 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>.

All 93 Nebraska counties are now covered by state Directed Health Measures (DHMs) until May 11 –<http://dhhs.ne.gov/coronavirus>. It's critical that Nebraskans follow these enforceable state Directed Health Measures to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in the state. These measures help protect each other and those who are more vulnerable to severe illness and death, and help hospitals and clinics from being overwhelmed so they can continue to provide care to families, friends and neighbors who need it.

In addition to the state-issued DHM, some Local Health Departments have issued additional restrictions - <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/COVID-19-Directed-Health-Measures.aspx>

DHHS supports Governor Ricketts in urging Nebraskans to follow the **Six Rules to Keep Nebraska Healthy.**

1. **Stay home.** No non-essential errands and no social gatherings. Respect the ten-person limits.
2. **Socially distance your work.** Work from home or use the six-foot rule as much as possible in the workplace.
3. **Shop alone.** Do this only once a week and do not take your family with you.
4. **Help kids social distance.** Play at home, no group sports and no playgrounds.
5. **Help seniors stay at home.** This can be done by shopping for them. Do not visit long-term facilities.
6. **Exercise daily.** Do your best to stay as healthy and safe as you can.

Recent studies show that a significant portion of people with COVID-19 lack symptoms and those who eventually develop symptoms can pass the virus to others before showing symptoms, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC now recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (grocery stores, pharmacies, etc.) especially in areas of significant community-based transmission - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-faq.html>.

Cloth face coverings are not a substitute for social distancing. Public health officials continue to emphasize that maintaining 6-feet social distancing is crucial to slowing the spread of the virus.

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> .