Media Information:

For immediate release:
March 27, 2020

First Hospitalization for COVID-19
Updated Case Count in Yellowstone County

Billings, MT – The Unified Health Command (UHC), made up of Billings Clinic, St. Vincent Healthcare, RiverStone Health and Yellowstone County Disaster and Emergency Services, reports the first hospitalization for COVID-19 in Yellowstone County.

A man in his 80s was hospitalized in Billings and is stable and in fair condition. He does not require a ventilator. The hospital is following CDC recommended precautions and isolation guidelines for both care of COVID-19 patients and preventing the spread of illness.

Montana is reporting 108 cases of COVID-19 as of March 27, 2020 and seven of those individuals are hospitalized. Twenty-two individuals in Yellowstone County are among those who have tested positive for COVID-19 as of 11 a.m. on March 27, 2020. Yellowstone County cases include:

- Female in her 50s, who had an international travel history.
- Female in her 20s, who had contact with a confirmed case.
- Male in his 80s, who had contact with a confirmed case.
- Female in her 20s, who had an international travel history.
- Male in his 20s, who had contact with a confirmed case.
- Male in his 20s, whose exposure is unknown.
- Male in his 30s, whose exposure in unknown.
- Female in her 30s, whose exposure is unknown.
- Male in his 20s, who had a domestic travel exposure.
- Female in her 20s, who had contact with a confirmed case.
- Male in his teens, who had contact with a confirmed case.
- Male in his 30s, whose exposure is unknown.
- Female in her 80s, whose exposure is unknown.
- Male in his 20s, contact with a confirmed case.

- Male in his teens, known contact with a confirmed case.
- Female in her 50s, who had a domestic travel exposure.
- Female in her 40s, investigation in progress.
- Female in her 40s, whose exposure is unknown.
- Female in her 20s, whose exposure is unkown.
- Male in his 50s, investigation in progress.
- Female in her 60s, investigation in progress.
- Male in his 50s, investigation in progress.

In the future, because of the volume of cases in Yellowstone County, information on those cases will only be available through the Montana COVID-19 Case Map at: https://montana.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=7c34f3412536439491ad cc2103421d4b
Clicking once on Yellowstone County provides data on gender and age ranges of people testing positive for COVID-19. **Please note:** There may be small discrepancies between the map and Yellowstone County case counts.

"The rise in cases of COVID-19 in Yellowstone County is likely due in part to increased testing," said John Felton, Yellowstone County Health Officer and President/CEO of RiverStone Health. "Some of the individuals testing positive have unknown exposure and therefore we have made the assumption that we have community spread of COVID-19. Because of this, it is especially important that people follow the Governor's directive and stay home whenever possible and stay six feet away from others if they have to leave home." Felton went on to say, "We are seeing more cases and hospitalizations across the country and limiting face-to-face interactions and taking other precautions now are critical to slowing the spread and preventing our hospitals from becoming overwhelmed."

All UHC healthcare facilities have set up health information phone lines:
- Billings Clinic HealthLine: 406.255.8400
- St. Vincent Healthcare: 406.237.8775
- RiverStone Health Public Health Information line: 406.651.6415

If you think you have a respiratory illness, please follow this interim advice:
- If you are sick and have mild symptoms, stay home and self-isolate as much as possible.
- If you are sick enough that you would normally go to the doctor, call ahead to your care provider for instructions.
- To avoid spreading respiratory illnesses, please do not show up at a clinic, hospital, or testing site without calling in advance for instructions.

Everyday Precautions:
Since we are still in the midst of cold and flu season, we all have a responsibility to reduce risks of respiratory illness, including COVID-19.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and often.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Avoid large crowds, especially in enclosed spaces.

- Encourage all family members to cover their cough and sneezes with a tissue.
- Maintain social distance to avoid possible exposure to viruses.
- Avoid handshakes and hugs.
- Frequently clean "high-touch" surfaces in your home or workplace. Disinfect doorknobs, handles, keyboards, railings, remote controls, tabletops and counters.

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