



Media Information:

For immediate release:

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Yellowstone County reports 13 more COVID-19 deaths

Billings, MT – The number of COVID-19 related deaths among Yellowstone County residents continued to decrease in March, but state health officials this week notified RiverStone Health of 13 residents who died of the viral illness over the winter. At least 261 Yellowstone County residents have succumbed to pandemic illness, according to RiverStone Health records.

“I am saddened to learn that 13 more of our neighbors passed away and that 13 more families have been grieving pandemic victims,” said John Felton, Yellowstone County health officer and president and CEO of RiverStone Health. “With vaccinations now widely available and continued precautions of handwashing, distancing and masking, I am hopeful that we can prevent serious illness and death going forward.”

Officials with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services in Helena identified these 13 cases through death certificate review that showed COVID-19 was a cause of death. The state notified RiverStone Health on April 7.

Reconciliation of death records is an ongoing process at the state and local level. The number of deaths related to COVID-19 is unprecedented and has posed challenges for timely reporting for the state and counties across Montana. RiverStone Health and the Yellowstone County Clerk and Recorder’s Office have been working closely to avoid delays in notification of death due to COVID-19. All the Yellowstone County deaths reported by the state this week occurred before RiverStone Health and the clerk’s office had their process in place. In the future, DPHHS plans to notify Yellowstone County weekly of death record reconciliations so there should be fewer reported all at once.

DPHHS has sent RiverStone death certificates for 11 of these individuals whose deaths are be reflected today on the state COVID-19 map:

A man in his 80s who died November 11, 2020, in a long-term care facility.

A woman in her 90s who died on December 1, 2020, at a long-term care facility.

A man in his 80s who died on January 10, 2021, at an assisted living facility.

A woman in her 60s who died on January 18 at a hospital.

A man in his 60s who died on January 19, 2021, at home.

A women in her 70s who died on January 20, 2021, in an assisted living facility.

A woman in her 80s who died on January 21, 2021, in an assisted living facility.

A woman in her 70s who died on January 22, 2021, at a hospital.

A man in his 80s who died on January 23, 2021, at an assisted living facility.

A man in his 50s who died on February 6, 2021, in a hospital.

A woman in her 60s who died on February 14, 2021, in an assisted living facility.

RiverStone Health will release information on the two additional deaths after we receive it from DPHHS.

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