



Media Information:

For immediate release:

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COVID-19 claims 7 Yellowstone County lives this week

Billings, MT – Seven Yellowstone County residents have died of COVID-19 related illness since Sunday, RiverStone Health reported on Friday. This is the highest one-week death toll since 10 Yellowstone County residents died of COVID-19 illness Jan. 10-16. Our county has lost 295 residents to the pandemic since April 2020.

The most recent deaths involved a woman in her 60s and two women in their 70s. All three women died Thursday at Billings hospitals. None had been vaccinated against COVID-19 and all had underlying health conditions.

“As we offer sympathy to the friends and family of these three pandemic victims, the current COVID-19 trends are disturbing,” said John Felton, Yellowstone County health officer and RiverStone Health CEO and president. “Yellowstone County has had more cases (1,445) at this point in August than we had in the entire months of May, June and July combined. Hospitalizations also are on the rise in Yellowstone County. So far, 105 people have been hospitalized this month, the most COVID-19 patients admitted since January when 119 patients were admitted.”

Today, Billings Clinic and St. Vincent Healthcare together are treating 68 inpatients for COVID-19 illness, including 18 in ICU and 14 on ventilators. A month ago, they had 25 COVID-19 patients.

Fifty-eight of the 68 people hospitalized today are unvaccinated. Further, more than 80% of COVID-19 patients recently hospitalized in Billings had not been vaccinated against the virus. If you haven't yet been vaccinated, please talk to your healthcare provider for advice on vaccination.

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine received full, regular Food and Drug Administration approval this week. The Pfizer vaccine, along with the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines have been given to millions of Americans and have been proven safe and highly effective in preventing serious COVID-19 illness.

RiverStone Health is offering first and second doses of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to everyone age 12 and older. The two-dose Moderna vaccine is available to people age 18 and older as is the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Third-doses of Pfizer and Moderna are available now only to immune-compromised people. RiverStone Health has scheduled these free, walk-in clinics:

- **Monday, Aug. 30, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.**, Rocky Mountain College, in the Bair Family Student Center.
- **Thursday, Sept. 2, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.**, RiverStone Health, 123 S. 27th, in the Lil Anderson Center (four-story building).
- **Sept. 23, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.**, RiverStone Health, in the four-story building.

Individuals may also make appointments for COVID-19 vaccination with the RiverStone Health Immunization Clinic. Call **247-3382**. Third doses for immune-compromised people are given *only* at the walk-in clinics, not by appointment. Immune-compromised people may also contact their primary care provider about getting a third COVID-19 vaccination.

More vaccination information is posted at covid.riverstonehealth.org.

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