



Media Information:

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124 COVID-19 patients in Billings hospitals, 2 more deaths

Billings, MT – Two more Yellowstone County women have passed away at Billings hospitals from COVID-19 related illness, RiverStone Health reported Monday.

A woman in her 50s died on Friday, Sept. 10. A woman in her 40s died on Monday, Sept. 13. Neither had been vaccinated and both had underlying medical problems. Their deaths raised the number of Yellowstone County residents lost to the pandemic virus to 306 people.

On Monday, Billings Clinic and St. Vincent Healthcare had 19 more COVID-19 patients than they did on Friday. On Monday, there were 124 inpatients with COVID-19 illness. Thirty-six of them were in ICU and 24 were on ventilators. Among the 124 COVID-19 patients, only 16 had been vaccinated against COVID-19.

The pandemic virus continues to infect residents and employees at Montana nursing homes and assisted living facilities. As of Friday, the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services reported 138 active COVID-19 cases statewide in 36 nursing homes and 206 active cases in 38 assisted living facilities. In Yellowstone County, a dozen long-term care facilities were restricting visitors – as required by federal regulations – because of active COVID-19 cases in staff or residents.

“This tragic news of more deaths again confirms the importance of vaccination,” said John Felton, Yellowstone County health officer and RiverStone Health CEO and president. “Please get vaccinated to save lives and to reduce the overwhelming COVID-19 demands on our healthcare system.”

RiverStone Health is offering free 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 will be given only to immune-compromised people and only at walk-in clinics. RiverStone Health has scheduled a free, walk-in clinic for **Thursday, Sept. 23, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.**, at 123 S. 27th St., in the four-story building.

To make appointments for first and second vaccine doses with the RiverStone Health Immunization Clinic, call **247-3382**. More vaccination information is posted at covid.riverstonehealth.org.

The Food and Drug Administration will hold a meeting on Friday, Sept. 17, to discuss “booster” COVID-19 vaccinations. Planning is underway for community vaccination clinics if and when booster vaccinations become available to the general population.

The FDA is also expected to meet in the near future about COVID-19 vaccinations for people younger than 12 years. Until vaccinations for this group are approved, the FDA urges parents not to prematurely vaccinate their children.

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