



Media Information:

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Deadly weekend: COVID-19 claims 7 Yellowstone County lives

Billings, MT – Seven Yellowstone County residents died over the weekend of COVID-19 related illness, RiverStone Health reported Monday. The victims ranged in age from 20s to 90s. All had underlying medical conditions; none were vaccinated against COVID-19.

The deceased include: two women in their 50s who passed away Friday, Sept. 17; a woman in her 60s who died on Friday; a man in his 20s who died on Saturday; a man in his 80s who died Saturday; a woman in her 80s who died on Saturday; and a man in his 90s who died on Sunday. All were hospitalized in Billings when they passed away.

“The number of COVID-19 deaths in our community burdens so many of our neighbors with loss and grief,” said John Felton, Yellowstone County health officer and RiverStone Health CEO and president. “At least 20 Yellowstone County residents have died of COVID-19 illness in the first 19 days of September. That is more county people lost to COVID-19 in such a short time since January. The Yellowstone County death toll is now 320.

“That is a staggering number,” Felton said. “Three hundred twenty people is more than the population of Belfry, or Roberts or Reedpoint. It’s more than the entire roster of six National Football League teams combined.

“Every one of these lives matters,” Felton said. “I implore every Yellowstone County resident to get vaccinated because that is the safest, surest way to curtail this pandemic. Wear a mask indoors in public places; avoid crowds as much as you can, wash your hands frequently and thoroughly and use hand sanitizer.”

On Monday, Billings Clinic and St. Vincent Healthcare reported 101 hospitalized patients with COVID-19 illness, including 85 people who were not fully vaccinated. The hospitals had 35 COVID-19 patients in ICU and 23 on ventilators.

At RiverStone Health, third doses of COVID-19 vaccine are given now only to immune-compromised people and only at walk-in clinics. The Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are considering recommendations for a booster shot for people over age 64 and some additional people who have certain medical conditions. The agencies' decision is expected in coming weeks. RiverStone Health will follow the CDC guidelines in providing doses of COVID-19 vaccine.

RiverStone Health has scheduled these free, walk-in COVID-19 vaccine clinics for people age 12 and older to receive first and second vaccine shots:

- Wednesday, Sept. 22, noon-2 p.m., Billings Public Library Community Room.
- Wednesday, Sept. 22, 4-6 p.m., Lockwood High School, community room.
- Thursday, Sept. 23, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., RiverStone Health, 123 S. 27th St., in the four-story building.
- Sept. 29, noon-2 p.m., Billings Public Library Community Room.
- Sept. 30, 2-6 p.m. RiverStone Health Clinic, Main Street in Worden.
- Oct. 5, noon-2 p.m., Billings Public Library Community Room.
- Oct. 7, 4:30-6:30 p.m., Healthy By Design Gardeners' Market, South Park.
- Oct. 12, noon-2 p.m., Billings Public Library Community Room.
- Oct. 20, noon-2 p.m. Billings Public Library Community Room.
- Oct. 27, 2 p.m.-4 p.m., Billings Public Library Community Room.

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.

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