



Media Information:

For immediate release:
September 22, 2021

22 deaths in 22 days: Yellowstone County COVID-19 toll rises

Billings, MT – Another Yellowstone County resident has died of COVID-19 illness, increasing the county’s pandemic loss to 322 people, including 22 people who passed away this month, RiverStone Health reported Wednesday.

On Wednesday, Billings Clinic and St. Vincent Healthcare had 109 COVID-19 inpatients, including 32 in ICU and 22 on ventilators. Eighty-eight of the 109 patients weren’t fully vaccinated.

Nearly 400 Montanans were hospitalized statewide for treatment of COVID-19 illness Wednesday, according to the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. Eight of Montana’s 10 largest hospitals were near, at or over patient capacity, accord to a DPHHS report released Tuesday.

Seven of eight indicators on the Yellowstone County COVID-19 dashboard are red, signifying critical concerns for outpacing capacity of public health in case investigation and follow-up, healthcare system, respiratory cases coming into hospital emergency departments, positive test rate, new case rate and regional case rate. The dashboard indicator for COVID-19 testing capacity is yellow, reflecting that need for testing is beginning to outpace capacity.

The latest Yellowstone County pandemic victim was a woman in her 60s who died Wednesday at a Billings hospital. She had been fully vaccinated and had underlying medical conditions.

“Words of sympathy fall short of expressing the tremendous sorrow caused by these continuing tragedies,” said John Felton, Yellowstone County health officer and RiverStone Health CEO and president. “To stop this virus, we must take all evidenced-based precautions, starting with vaccinations for everyone age 12 and older.”

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

- 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.

At RiverStone Health, third doses of vaccine for immune-compromised people are available only at our walk-in clinics listed above. Booster shots for other people won't be available until after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends them.

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.

###