



## Media Information:

**For immediate release:**

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### **COVID-19 cases climb, 1 more Yellowstone County resident dies**

**Billings, MT** – COVID-19 cases continue to surge in Yellowstone County, straining our healthcare and public health services. The county posted a daily record of 334 new cases Thursday and a record high of 2,054 cases awaiting investigation, RiverStone Health said.

A woman in her 80s who passed away Wednesday at a Billings hospital became the 339<sup>th</sup> Yellowstone County resident to die of COVID-19 related illness. She was fully vaccinated and had underlying health conditions.

Meanwhile, on Thursday, Billings Clinic and St. Vincent Healthcare had 118 COVID-19 patients in their hospitals, including 96 who are unvaccinated.

All individuals with positive COVID-19 tests will receive letters from RiverStone Health with instructions for isolating themselves to prevent spreading the virus to others. Most cases won't be investigated because the high number of cases has outpaced limited resources.

RiverStone Health is prioritizing investigation of COVID-19 cases involving people age zero to 19 in an effort to help slow down the spread of disease in schools.

“The high incidence of COVID-19 in our community warrants all of us to take precautions,” said John Felton, Yellowstone County health officer and RiverStone Health president and CEO. “First, I strongly encourage everyone age 12 and older to receive safe, effective vaccines that are readily available at local pharmacies, hospitals and clinics. Additionally, people age 2 and older should wear masks in public, indoor spaces. Everyone should try to avoid crowds and practice consistent, thorough handwashing. These steps will reduce your risk of getting infected with COVID-19.”

RiverStone Health will hold these free, walk-in COVID-19 vaccine clinics:

- Thursday, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Healthy By Design Gardeners' Market, South Park.
- Saturday, 9 a.m. to noon, Harvest Fest, downtown Billings.
- Monday, 4 to 6 p.m., Billings YMCA.

- Tuesday, noon to 2 p.m., Billings Public Library Community Room.
- Oct. 14, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., RiverStone Health, 123 S. 27<sup>th</sup> St., in the four-story building.
- Oct. 19, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., City College, Tech Building, Room A017.
- Oct. 20, noon to 2 p.m. Billings Public Library Community Room.
- Oct. 21, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., North Park.
- Oct. 22, 11 am. to 1 p.m., Terry Park.
- Oct. 27, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Billings Public Library Community Room.

Clinics listed above will offer first and second doses and booster shots of Pfizer vaccine, along with first and second doses of Moderna and the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine to people 18 and older. Third doses of Moderna and Pfizer vaccines are available to certain immune-compromised people.

Only the two-dose Pfizer vaccine is recommended for children ages 12-17. Children will need a parent or guardian to sign their vaccination consent form.

A limited number of vaccination appointments are available from the RiverStone Health Immunization Clinic, phone **406.247.3382**. More vaccination information is posted at [covid.riverstonehealth.org](https://covid.riverstonehealth.org).

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