Media Information:

For immediate release:
December 1, 2021

Yellowstone County COVID-19 deaths total 455

Billings, MT – November 2021 ended on a somber note with two more Yellowstone County residents having died on Monday, November 29 of COVID-19 related illness. Since recording the first pandemic death in April 2020, 455 county residents have died.

The most recent Yellowstone County victims to die in a Billings hospital include:
- A man in his 50s who died on November 29. He was unvaccinated and had underlying health conditions.
- A man in his 70s who died on November 29. He was vaccinated and had underlying health conditions.

For the month of November, Billings' hospitals averaged 93 people a day hospitalized with COVID-19. Of those, an average of 29 people were in the ICU and 20 of them were on ventilators. Of the average of 93 people hospitalized each day, 75, or 80% were not vaccinated.

Yellowstone County also lost at least 44 residents in November and each, with the exception of one (whose health condition is unknown), had underlying health conditions. Sixty-six percent of the people who died were unvaccinated, the vaccination status for 6% was unknown and 27% of those who died were vaccinated.

The month of December begins with 71 COVID-19 inpatients, including 61 who are not vaccinated. Among the hospitalized COVID-19 patients, 27 are in ICU and 21 are on ventilators.

The safest, most effective way to reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 illness and death is to be vaccinated. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended that everyone ages 18 and older get a COVID-19 booster shot 6 months after their initial Pfizer or Moderna series or 2 months after their initial Johnson & Johnson vaccine.
While much is still unknown about the Omicron COVID-19 variant, the first case of the variant has been identified in the United States. Vaccination, including boosters, is the best tool to avoid serious illness and hospitalization.

<u>**December vaccination clinics**</u>

RiverStone Health will host the following vaccination clinics in the month of December.
- December 2, 4 – 6:30 p.m. in Cedar Hall at MetraPark.
- December 4, 9 a.m. – noon in Cedar Hall at MetraPark. Family and pediatric clinic.
- December 9, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at RiverStone Health, 123 S. 27th in the four-story building.
- December 11, 9 a.m. – noon in Cedar Hall at MetraPark. Family and pediatric clinic.
- December 30, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at RiverStone Health, 123 S. 27th, in the four-story building.

Masks are required at all vaccination clinics. Children under 18 must have signed parental consent for vaccination. All clinics offer the three U.S. approved COVID-19 vaccines.

<u>**Last week for drive-through testing**</u>
This is the last week for the free, drive-through community testing site in the St. Vincent Healthcare parking lot M at North 28th Street and 11th Avenue North. The testing site is open on Thursday and Friday, December 2 and 3 from 9 a.m. until noon. For additional testing options, go to covid.riverstonehealth.org and look under "I need to be tested for COVID-19".

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