



## Media Information:

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### **COVID-19 illness claims 473 Yellowstone County lives**

**Billings, MT** – Another Yellowstone County resident has died of COVID-19 related illness. The latest victim is a man in his 70s who died on Wednesday at a Billings hospital. He was not vaccinated and had underlying medical conditions that put him at higher risk for severe COVID-19 illness.

Including the death reported today, 473 Yellowstone County residents have lost their lives to the pandemic virus. Statewide, 2,873 Montanans have succumbed, according to the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.

On Thursday, Billings hospitals had 47 COVID-19 inpatients, including 43 who weren't vaccinated and four who were vaccinated. Among the hospitalized COVID-19 patients, 18 were in ICU and 13 were on ventilators.

Vaccination remains the safest, most effective way to reduce risk of COVID-19 illness, hospitalization and death. So far, 52% of Montanans age five and older have been fully immunized against this virus. In Yellowstone County, 51% of residents age five and older have been fully immunized.

COVID-19 vaccines continue to be readily available at local medical clinics and pharmacies. RiverStone Health will offer these free, walk-in community COVID-19 vaccination clinics for people age five and older:

- 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday at MetraPark's Cedar Hall, an older, stucco building near the west end of the area where the carnival sets up during MontanaFair. This pediatric clinic offers children's activities, therapy dogs and Santa Claus. Children as young as five years as well as adults can receive vaccines at this clinic.
- 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Dec. 30 at RiverStone Health, 123 S. 27<sup>th</sup> St., in the four-story building.

All three COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in the United States will be available at these clinics. People can receive first, second and booster doses as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. People who previously had one or two doses should bring their vaccination card. Parents must sign consent forms for children under 18.

Masks are required at the vaccination clinics.

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