



## Media Information:

**For immediate release:**

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### **Yellowstone Count reports 4 COVID-19 deaths in April**

**Billings, MT** – Four Yellowstone County residents have died of COVID-19 related illness in April. Additionally, through death certificate reconciliation by Yellowstone County officials, three more March deaths are being reported today.

Our county's pandemic death toll stands at 557 residents lost to the virus. Seventy of those deaths occurred in 2022.

All of the Yellowstone County residents whose deaths are reported today had underlying health conditions that put them at high risk for severe COVID-19 illness. The deceased include:

- A woman in her 80s who died on April 22 at a Billings hospital. She was fully vaccinated.
- A man in his 70s who died on April 6. He was not vaccinated.
- A man in his 70s who died at home on April 9. He was fully vaccinated and boosted
- A woman in her 90s who died on April 1 at a Billings hospital. She was fully vaccinated and boosted.
- A woman in her 90s who died March 18 at her home. She was not vaccinated.
- A woman in her 70s on March 16 at her home. She had received two doses of vaccine.
- A man in his 80s who died on March 14 at his home. He was not vaccinated.

As we offer sympathy to friends and family of these COVID-19 victims, health data indicates that the pandemic virus is at the lowest level in Yellowstone County in many months. In April, 188 county residents tested positive for COVID-19, the lowest number since June 2020 and far below the peak of 7,758 cases reported in January of this year during the Omicron variant surge.

In April, Billings hospitals logged only six new inpatients with COVID-19 illness who were Yellowstone County residents, compared with 20 in March. Hospital admissions peaked in October 2021 with 321 Yellowstone County residents admitted that month – along with many other COVID-19 patients from outside our county.

Our county continues to have COVID-19 cases diagnosed every week. Experience with COVID-19 shows that it can return and surge again. In 2021, new cases remained under 500 per month in March through July and then quadrupled in August.

Vaccination remains the safest, most effective measure for reducing the risk of serious illness and death from this virus. Free COVID-19 vaccinations are available by appointment at RiverStone Health Clinics in Billings, Bridger, Joliet and Worden. Call 406.247.3382 or 406.247.3350.

Free at-home COVID-19 test kits may be picked up at any RiverStone Health Clinic during regular operating hours or in the lobby of the Lil Anderson Center, the four-story building at RiverStone Health, 123 S. 27<sup>th</sup> St.

If you test positive for COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider right away. You may be eligible for prescription treatment medications. These medications must be started soon after a positive test to be effective.

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