

Our Vision: Healthy People in Healthy Communities
Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster Counties

For Immediate Release: Monday, October 19, 2020
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SHDHD: 99 new lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases in past 4 days; positivity increases to 17%

Hastings, Neb – Today South Heartland District Health Department (SHDHD) officials reported 99 new lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases in the past four days (Friday – Monday), bringing the cumulative total number of cases in the four-county health district to 1160. The new confirmed cases for the four-day period include: 47 in Adams, 13 in Clay, 18 in Nuckolls and 21 in Webster. By county, the new cumulative totals are: 805 cases in Adams, 152 cases in Clay, 103 cases in Nuckolls, and 100 cases in Webster.

In addition to the case counts for the past 4 days, health officials reported the total new cases for the week ending October 17. “There were 219 South Heartland residents with positive tests last week,” said SHDHD Executive Director Michele Bever. “This is the tenth straight week that the case numbers have increased - a net increase of 45% compared to the week before,” she said.

The percent positive tests (positivity) for South Heartland’s four-county area was 17.1% for the week ending Saturday, October 17. Bever said this calculation answers the question: Out of all of the COVID-19 tests conducted last week, what percent were positive? The positivity by county was 16.4% in Adams, 8.3% in Clay, 19.8% in Nuckolls and 31.2% in Webster.

Bever said lower positivity, means less community spread. “Our positivity is demonstrating we have high community spread,” she said. “Our positivity was below 1% four months ago. We can control this, we’ve done it before. I challenge all of our residents in Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster counties to take action – it is up to each of us to help slow the spread of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.”

Bever cited the revised directed health measures (DHM), announced at the Governor’s press conference on Friday. These measures will be effective at 12:00 am on October 21 and extend to 11:59 pm on November 30. “Under the Governor’s new directed health measures, Nebraska counties will have some restrictions back in place to help curb the spread of the coronavirus,” she said.

“Key changes in the DHM address gathering sizes (reduced to 50% capacity for indoor events) and restaurant/bar crowds (seats required), both requiring parties limited to eight (8) people and maintaining 6-feet of distance between groups or tables.” Bever said for event locations with capacity to accommodate 500 or more people, event safety plans are still required to be submitted to the health department for review and approval prior to holding the event. “Any previously approved plans will need to adjust for the new DHM requirements,” she said.

Bever urged residents to help turn the trends around. “Here’s what you can do to help reverse current COVID-19 trends: Avoid the three Cs,” she said. “Avoid crowded places, avoid close contact and avoid confined spaces. Protect others and yourselves everywhere you go, in everything you do. That includes maintaining six feet of distance from people you don’t live with and masking up to reduce risk of close contact exposures.”

The [new DHM](#), effective October 21 for Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster counties, is on South Heartland’s website. South Heartland District case counts and trends can be found on [SHDHD’s dashboard](#) of local COVID-19 case statistics. This dashboard, along with updates, guidance, news releases and other COVID-19 information and links can be found on the SHDHD website: www.southheartlandhealth.org. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) provides daily updates to Nebraska’s coronavirus COVID-19 cases on their Data Dashboard at <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Coronavirus>.