

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

For Immediate Release: Thursday, May 11, 2023
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SHDHD: As federal pandemic emergency declaration ends, local response activities continue

Hastings, Neb –South Heartland District Health Department (SHDHD) executive director Michele Bever reported that local COVID-19 response activities would be continuing forward even as the federal public health emergency declaration expires on Thursday, May 11.

“Although the federal emergency declaration ends today, the COVID-19 pandemic is not over. COVID-19 continues to circulate in our communities and SHDHD will continue some pandemic response activities,” Bever said.

“Most importantly, COVID-19 bivalent vaccine will continue to be available in our health district for the foreseeable future. We will be ordering, receiving and distributing vaccine for our approved health care provider partners in the health district and we will continue to offer our own regular walk-in COVID-19 vaccine clinics so that vaccine is available to those who want to be protected from severe illness and death,” Bever said.

Locations offering bivalent COVID-19 vaccine in Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster counties, are posted on the SHDHD website, southheartlandhealth.ne.gov. For more information about vaccine recommendations, see the website or call the health department office, 1-877-238-7595.

Bever said the health department staff will continue to monitor COVID-19 activity in the 4-county health district by tracking long term care facilities with outbreaks and virus levels in wastewater, as well as reported cases, hospitalizations, and deaths due to COVID-19. “We will be scaling back on our COVID-19 dashboard in the coming weeks, but we will continue tracking and sharing these metrics as long as the data is available to us,” she said.

Bever said the health department will also continue to promote testing for COVID-19 and she noted that locations for accessing testing or test kits are also posted on the health department website.

“With the virus continuing to circulate at low levels in our communities, people who are at higher risk for severe illness, but also those living, working and interacting with others who are more vulnerable to severe illness, should continue to take precautions against the spread of this respiratory virus,” she said.

Janis Johnson, a registered nurse and South Heartland’s immunization manager, said the department wants people to know that separating from others (self-quarantine) continues to be appropriate for individuals who test positive for COVID-19.

Johnson said the virus that causes COVID-19 continues to change and reinfect. “Precautions for COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses include staying home when you have symptoms, wearing a mask when you are around vulnerable individuals, frequent hand washing, and staying up to date on immunizations that can protect against severe illness,” she said.

SHDHD is offering walk-in access to free COVID-19 bivalent vaccine for ages 12 and up at 606 N. Minnesota Ave, Hastings, on the second and fourth Wednesday of May and June (May 24, June 14 and June 28), from 12:00 pm – 3:00 pm.

For other locations offering COVID-19 vaccine for ages 6 months and older in Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster counties, refer to the SHDHD website, southheartlandhealth.ne.gov, or call the health department office, 1-877-238-7595.

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