

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

For Immediate Release: May 4, 2020  
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**SHDHD reports 5 new COVID-19 cases and 5<sup>th</sup> death, begins reporting positivity rate**

**Hastings, Neb** – South Heartland District Health Department (SHDHD) officials reported five (5) new COVID-19 positive cases and a fifth coronavirus disease (COVID-19) related death of a South Heartland resident. The individual was a man in his 60s from Adams County who had been hospitalized.

“I am sad to report a fifth COVID-19 related death in Adams County,” said Michele Bever, SHDHD Executive Director. “As we send condolences to the family and hold them in our thoughts, we urge community members to continue to practice social distancing and prevention to help slow the spread of this disease.”

Bever said five new lab-confirmed cases reported to SHDHD today brings the total number of cases in the 4-county health district to 221, including 203 in Adams County, 13 in Clay County, 5 in Webster County, and zero in Nuckolls County.

New cases in Clay County:

- 1 male in his 30s
- 1 female in her 30s

New cases in Adams County:

- 1 female in her 30s
- 2 males (1 in his 50s, 1 in his 60s)

Bever said the health department has started tracking the positivity rate (percentage of tests that are positive), which is calculated by dividing the number of positive test results each week by the total number of test results each week. “We are monitoring the weekly trend, watching for a decline in this rate over time,” she said. “This will help us see how well our social distancing and prevention actions are working at reducing the spread and reducing the rate of new cases.”

“The weekly positivity rate for April 5-11 was 25%, it was 19% the next week, then 18%, and it was 15% this past week,” Bever said. “But the current decline in the positivity rate is due, in part, to less restrictive testing and increased capacity for testing, not necessarily due to a decline in disease levels in our counties,” she said. “We still need to continue to practice social distancing and prevention to drive this rate into the single digits.”

Bever reminds residents who are ill or have any symptoms consistent with coronavirus disease to stay home from work and to isolate at home to avoid spreading the illness to others. “People may have very mild or no symptoms at all, but the virus can spread easily through close person to person contact at work or at gatherings,” she said. “This often leads to new cases of COVID-19,” she said.

The revised directed health measures (DHM) issued by the Governor and Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS) for South Heartland District’s four counties took effect at 12:00 am on May 4, 2020 and will continue until May 31, 2020. All restrictions from the previous DHMs will continue through May 31, 2020, except for elective surgeries/procedures and religious services (to include wedding and

funerals). NDHHS developed COVID-19 Guidelines for the Conduct of Faith-Based Services, which can be found on the South Heartland website: <https://southheartlandhealth.org/public-health-data/corona-virus.html>.

South Heartland District case counts by county are updated daily on SHDHD's COVID webpage: <https://southheartlandhealth.org/public-health-data/corona-virus.html>. 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>.

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