

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19 Updates for Southwest Nebraska

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) is working with local partners to provide access to an online COVID-19 vaccination waiting list. There are many people interested in receiving the COVID vaccine, which is encouraging to those working to slow the spread of the virus. At this time the waiting list is for persons in Phase 1A and Phase 1B only. These phases are designated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the State of Nebraska. No waiting list is currently available for the general public. The waiting list for 1A and 1B in southwest Nebraska is located at www.swhealth.ne.gov/featured/1. For those without a computer or internet access, please reach out to a friend or family member for assistance.

Phase 1A covers most medical providers. Phase 1B – Tier 1 is for persons 75 years and older. Phase 1B- Tier II includes first responders, utility workers, and educators. Healthcare facilities are reporting being overwhelmed with calls from the public seeking the vaccine. We understand it is difficult to continue waiting after so many long months; however, we are asking the public to stop calling healthcare facilities and the health department in search of the vaccine. Instead, please wait patiently while the vaccine is distributed utilizing the federal guidelines.

The vaccine is not available to the public at this time nor is anticipated until March or April at the earliest. Further information will become available with each phase when enough vaccine is available.

The COVID-19 Community Risk Dial will now follow the State of Nebraska's risk dial which is being used to determine the Directed Health Measures. Currently all of Nebraska is in the blue level, between yellow and green. Recommendations include wearing a mask in public, washing hands and surfaces often, and avoiding the 3 C's: crowded spaces, close contact, and confined spaces.

SWNPHD had 143 new cases of COVID-19 reported December 29th to January 4th. A breakout by county includes: Chase – 28; Dundy – 8; Frontier – 9; Furnas – 10; Hayes – 3; Hitchcock – 8; Keith – 17; Perkins – 9; Red Willow – 51. This brings the totals for the health district to 3018 cases. A breakout of total cases by county is available on the website.

COVID-19 information can be found at dhhs.ne.gov and at swhealth.ne.gov. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th St (1 block north of Arby's) in McCook.

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