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News release

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Eight hospitalized in Butte with COVID, Health Department announces other data

Eight people remained hospitalized with COVID-19 illness at St. James Healthcare in Butte on Monday.

Health Officer Karen Sullivan said six of the eight are Butte-Silver Bow residents and two reside outside the county. Of the eight, five are in the hospital's intensive care unit, and two of those individuals are ventilated. Of the eight hospitalized individuals, five were not vaccinated against the virus. Those hospitalized range in age from their 40's into their 70's.

Going into Monday evening, the Butte-Silver Bow Health Department was reporting 94 active cases of COVID-19 in the county.

According to Sullivan, for the epidemiological week of Aug. 28-Sept. 3, the county saw 116 cases newly confirmed, which averages to more than 16 cases daily. The long holiday weekend saw more cases added, with four cases confirmed Saturday, three on Sunday, and 11 on Monday. An additional 13 cases were added Tuesday into the late afternoon.

Median age for the epi-week was 33.5 years. Of the 116 cases during that week, 57 people – or 49 percent – were not vaccinated against COVID-19. Forty-three individuals – or 37 percent – were vaccinated. Six individuals were ineligible for the vaccine, and one person was partially vaccinated with one dose. The vaccination status of nine people was unknown.

Of the 94 active cases going into Monday evening, eight were age 17 or younger, with four of those individuals ineligible to be vaccinated because they're younger than age 12.

“As previously stated, with the Delta variant to the virus in play, younger people are finding the virus and its variants – particularly Delta – a reality,” Sullivan said. “Many people in this community have done the right thing and gotten vaccinated, but we're seeing too many breakthrough cases for our comfort.”

Sullivan said county officials continue to worry that many people who are ill are not seeking testing that would confirm the COVID-19 virus. Those seeking a test may call Southwest Montana Community Health Center at 723-4075. Testing is also available at select area pharmacies, and home tests are now available over the counter. Sullivan said those testing positive at home can seek guidance from the Health Department at 497-5008 or 497-5041.

The Health Department continues to work closely with K-12 school entities and Montana Technological University on managing virus issues. So far this school year for Butte School District No. 1, which began classes Aug. 30, 10 students or staff have tested positive for COVID-19. At Montana Tech, which began classes Aug. 23, 21 students or staff have tested positive.



As of Monday, the Health Department was reporting a test positivity rate of 7.4 percent, up from 6.8 percent from the previous time period. The department was also reporting 33.88 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population. The Harvard Global Health Institute says that communities sustaining more than 25 cases per 100,000 population should be implementing mitigation measures, such as mask-wearing and social distancing.

“We repeat our cautions – please mask up when in indoor public places, please socially distance whenever possible, and please get vaccinated,” Sullivan said.

Sixty-one percent of eligible Butte-Silver Bow residents are vaccinated, putting the county at No. 2 in the state for vaccination rate, behind Missoula County, which is at 63 percent.

COVID-19 vaccines are widely available, with pop-up clinics planned as follows:

- Wednesday, Sept. 8, Highlands College, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Thursday, Sept. 9, Vaccine Sweepstakes event at the Butte Civic Center, 1-2:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Sept. 11, Farmers Market in Uptown Butte, 10 a.m.-noon.

Third shots are now being administered to those who self-attest to being immune-compromised and those on immunosuppressant therapy.

In addition to the pop-up locations, vaccines are also available at Safeway on Massachusetts; Walgreens; CVS; Walmart; the Medical Arts Pharmacy next to St. James Healthcare; the Butte-Silver Bow Health Department; and Southwest Montana Community Health Center.

The \$525,000 Butte-Silver Bow COVID-19 Vaccine Sweepstakes continues. Five winners of two \$10,000 awards and three \$5,000 awards are announced weekly, with the next announcement scheduled Thursday at 2 p.m. at the Butte Civic Center. The sweepstakes continues through Sept. 30.

Sullivan said \$385,000 has been awarded to 55 individuals since June 24. Butte-Silver Bow residents who are fully vaccinated are automatically entered into the sweepstakes.