



# Panhandle Health District

*Healthy People in Healthy Communities*

**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Panhandle Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Community Transmission Identified in Benewah & Bonner Counties**

The Panhandle Health District (PHD) has identified community transmission in Benewah and Bonner counties. In the Panhandle area, community transmission, also referred to as community spread, has been identified in Kootenai, Bonner, and Benewah counties.

Community spread means at least one person has been infected with the virus and through contact tracing we are unable to determine how or where they became infected. The individual(s) did not travel and had no identified contact with another person with COVID-19. PHD urges all residents to assume the virus could be anywhere in the community and surrounding counties.

We have a total of 97 cases of COVID-19 in the Panhandle area as of today. That is an increase of 18 cases since last week. Kootenai county has 78 cases, Benewah county has 7 cases, and Bonner county has 5 cases. We are still researching 7 of the cases to determine what county they primarily reside in. Of the total cases, we are no longer monitoring 69 cases, so we have a total of 28 active cases currently.

The CDA Tribe has announced that there are 22 cases associated with the reservation. We realize this does not match our case count for Benewah county. We count cases by an individual's primary county of residence, so the cases the Tribe has announced aren't necessarily all primary residents of Benewah county. Once we receive notification of a confirmed case from a lab, we connect with that individual to verify their information. This can be difficult for a variety of reasons. Contact tracing is voluntary and we rely on an individual's willingness to participate. Information provided may be incomplete, incorrect, or not provided at all. Those experiencing homelessness or are in a transient living situation are other possible reasons it may take longer to determine a primary county of residence.

PHD will continue to monitor the situation closely and are working with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, our tribal communities, city leaders, schools, emergency management, healthcare providers, and our community at large to help prevent the further spread of this virus. The Panhandle area covers the 5 northern counties, Kootenai, Bonner, Benewah, Boundary, and Shoshone.

According to the CDC, people with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness.

Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

This list is not all possible symptoms. Other less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

If community members have these symptoms and they become severe, they should call PHD's call center at 1-877-415-5225 or their provider. PHD will provide an over-the-phone assessment to determine if someone should be tested. Please call, do not come into PHD or your provider's office.

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**Panhandle Health District** provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.

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