



# Panhandle Health District

*Healthy People in Healthy Communities*

**Public Health**

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Panhandle Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **PHD Expresses Gratitude and Farewell to National Guard**

**PANHANDLE HEALTH DISTRICT** — Since December 2020, Panhandle Health District (PHD) and other healthcare providers in the area, were supported by the Idaho National Guard (IDNG) for the COVID-19 response. With case counts shrinking and a decreased demand for the vaccine, it is time for these service men and women to head home.

“The Idaho National Guard’s support has been integral in ensuring an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic and aiding PHD in the reduction of the loss of life and the sustainment of our community’s health,” said Don Duffy, Health Services Administrator for PHD. “They have supported our COVID-19 response operations in the five northern counties in a variety of initiatives. We truly could not have done this without their support and we will miss having them as part of our team.”

A total of 74 National Guardsmen served the North Idaho community as a part of a larger, statewide COVID-19 response initiative. This was an all-volunteer team of Idahoans who raised their hand to help their neighbors in a time of need. Specifically, the IDNG assisted with the following:

- IDNG directly supported the COVID-19 vaccine operations and provided numerous operational functions such as: patient intake, quality control, vaccine loading, traffic control, and logistical support. Operations have been conducted 6 days a week resulting in over 39,000 vaccinations administered during their time in the community. Additionally, the Guard worked in conjunction with Panhandle Health District, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, and numerous other agencies to support an international vaccination clinic for members of the Lower Kootenay Band of Canada at the US-Canadian border.
- Soldiers coordinated with local partners to store, process, and deliver over 110,000 vaccinations in the five northern counties.

- Numerous service members served at PHD's COVID-19 call center. They worked closely with Medical Reserve Corps and PHD staff to provide the community with a direct line of support to answer questions and address concerns.
- The remainder of the assigned personnel supported PHD by providing operational planning, logistics planning and support, and National Guard administration.

Due to the decrease in demand and the reduction in available staffing, PHD will be closing the mass vaccine clinics at North Idaho College in Coeur d'Alene and Rathdrum and the University of Idaho Agriculture Center in Sandpoint effective July 8. Anyone who would like to receive a COVID-19 vaccine can schedule an appointment at any of our office locations in Hayden, Sandpoint, St. Maries, Bonners Ferry, and Kellogg.

If you have questions about COVID-19 in our area, call PHD's COVID-19 hotline Monday – Friday, 8am-5pm, 877-415-5225.

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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.