



CITY-COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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NEWS RELEASE

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School Closures & Three Additional COVID-19 Deaths in Cascade County

Great Falls, MT – Cascade County is grieved to announce three more COVID-19 deaths in Cascade County since November 7th. This brings us to 45 total deaths in our community.

These individuals were:

- (1) female in her 50s
- (1) female in her 80s
- (1) male in his 80s

We are deeply sorry for the families and friends of these individuals, and hope that Cascade County residents can join together to lend them compassion and support.

Earlier today, Great Falls Public Schools announced that schools will be closing this Friday until after Thanksgiving break, resuming November 30. The Cascade City-County Health Department supports this decision. These are difficult times, and we appreciate the measures our community is taking to slow the advance of COVID-19 transmission. Almost every business, including hospitals and other critical infrastructure—including public health!—have been affected impacted by this pandemic, particularly when it comes to staffing. The schools are no different.

That said, it is also clear that the impact of school closures will be felt widely—by working parents, by childcare providers, by employers, by organizations providing assistance to families in need—and we ask that all Cascade County residents come together over these two weeks to support the difficult but necessary decision our schools have made. If we all take this time seriously, and do everything in our power to keep COVID-19 at a distance despite the changes in our everyday routines that these closures will undoubtedly cause, then we will all be in a better place when schools resume in-person learning on November 30th. The next couple weeks could make a critical difference in creating a safe learning environment for our kids, and in keeping businesses running smoothly.

It is to the benefit of every community member that businesses and individuals continue to take prevention seriously and do everything they can to curb the spread of this virus. Known prevention measures include:

- Staying home when you are sick and getting tested if symptoms are consistent with COVID-19
- Limiting interactions with others and thinking critically about the necessity of engaging in certain events/outings/gatherings
- Social distancing wherever possible
- Universal masking and proper mask wearing
- Good sanitation practices and hand washing
- Isolating if you are positive, and notifying everyone you were in contact with for 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms or 48 hours prior to test date
- Quarantining if you have had close contact with a positive case, and continuing to quarantine for 2 weeks from the time you were exposed

Together we can make an impact.

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