



South Central Public Health District
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NEWS RELEASE--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19 Related Deaths More Than Doubled in November Compared to October

South Central Idaho – COVID-19 related deaths reported to South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) have more than doubled in the last month. In November, 74 individuals fighting the COVID-19 virus died, totaling more deaths than the first seven months of the pandemic combined.

Month	Number of reported COVID-19 related fatalities
March	3
April	16
May	14
June	5
July	9
August	9
September	15
October	31
November	74

“You may see these numbers and assume the individuals were already gravely ill, but some of our highest-risk factors for severe COVID-19 symptoms are conditions that otherwise would not be considered a death sentence,” said Tanis Maxwell, epidemiology program manager. “When you consider that common conditions like obesity, diabetes, hypertension, asthma, etc. are all

risk factors, you begin to realize how many Idahoans really are in danger of severe side effects from this disease.”

High-risk factor (as defined by the CDC)*	Percent of population within South Central Idaho region**
Obesity	31.2
65+ years old	17
Smoking	15.2
Cancer Diagnosis	11.7
Diabetes	10.4
Asthma	8.7

*See link to a full list of risk factors below.

**Disease data from the most recent Idaho Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Age data from the U.S. Census. Links below.

Of the 176 total deaths related to COVID-19 in south central Idaho by end of November, 84 were residents of long-term care facilities.

“These are our most vulnerable population in the state. Not only are they typically in their later years, but they are living in close quarters with each other and have frequent interactions with staff who come in and out of the facility every day,” said Brenda Gully, COVID-19 Rapid Response Leader. “If the virus is spreading rapidly in our community it will find its way into these facilities and the impact is often deadly.”

Currently 39 of 56 long-term care facilities in the region have an active outbreak. Several of these are uncontrolled, meaning they have more than 5 cases among their staff and residents.

“The last two months have seen such a huge surge in cases that an accompanying increase in deaths is concerning, but not a surprise,” said Mehli Marcellus, SCPHD investigator. “Please help us protect our communities. Choose to wear a mask properly, social distance, and avoid large gatherings. These steps go far in protecting your community, especially the vulnerable among us who need our help the most.”

South Central Public Health District is running two COVID-19 informational hotlines, one in English at (208) 737-1138, and one in Spanish, at (208) 737-5965. These hotlines are currently

running from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

Idaho Health and Welfare is also running a hotline for people feeling overwhelmed, isolated, or distressed because of COVID-19. That hotline is available 24/7 at 888-330-3010.

Resources:

IDHW press release, COVID-19 is now the leading cause of death in Idaho:

<https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/news/covid-19-now-leading-cause-death-idaho>

Please refer to <https://phd5.idaho.gov/coronavirus> for the latest local numbers and guidance.

Refer to <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/> for statewide information.

United States Census Population estimates:

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>

Idaho Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS):

<https://publicdocuments.dhw.idaho.gov/WebLink/DocView.aspx?id=6068&dbid=0&repo=PUBLIC-DOCUMENTS&cr=1>

High-risk factors defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>