



Holdrege Urban Area - COVID-19 Status Report 19 Mar 2021

Background

The Two Rivers Public Health Department (TRPHD) covers 7 counties in central Nebraska, reaching 97,132 people who live and work in the health district spread across roughly 4663 square miles. Over three quarters of residents live in Buffalo and Dawson county, a tenth live in Phelps county, and the remaining 15% is spread somewhat comparably among the four counties of Kearney, Harlan, Franklin and Gosper in decreasing order of population. Well over half the residents of TRPHD live in the three largest cities - Holdrege (pop. 5408), Lexington (pop. 10115) and Kearney (pop. 33867), over a third in Kearney alone.

To better understand COVID transmission in TRPHD ¹, we decided to analyze case numbers in Kearney, Lexington and Holdrege urban areas, defined as the city and surrounding smaller towns

- “Kearney area” includes Kearney city, Elm Creek, Pleasanton, Amherst, Riverdale, Gibbon, Shelton and Axtell (39,412 people)
- “Lexington area” includes Lexington, Overton, Elwood, Johnson Lake and Cozad (15,700 people)
- “Holdrege area” includes Holdrege, Loomis and Funk (5967 people).

In the twentieth edition of this document, we will

- a) Look at the overall course of the COVID-19 pandemic in TRPHD from **April - February** (49 weeks) and identify outbreaks in each of the three **urban areas**.
- b) Analyze daily case averages (7-day rolling) in **Kearney, Lexington and Holdrege cities** from **April 1 - March 16**.
- c) Describe 7-day rolling average of cases¹ in **Holdrege area** by age and city of residence from **July 01 - March 16**.
- d) Describe the 7-day rolling average of COVID-19 cases from **Feb 16 - Mar 16** (4 weeks) across cities in Two Rivers Health District. Present the same case counts/10,000 persons.
- e) Present a brief weekly overview and analysis for **Holdrege urban area**.

To conclude, daily COVID counts have dropped dramatically over the past two weeks in Holdrege urban area and across Phelps county. COVID-related admissions currently account for less than 5% of all medical/ surgical beds in TRPHD. Almost 19% of eligible residents in 7 counties in TRPHD have been fully vaccinated, the highest rate among health departments in the state. However, Phelps county has vaccinated the least proportion of its residents, only about 13% of eligible residents are fully vaccinated, compared to 23% in Kearney county. Those eligible for the vaccine are advised to contact their physician or register at Two Rivers Health Department (www.trphd.org). In the meantime, residents are advised to continue to adhere to strict preventive measures (social distancing, correct and consistent masking) at all times to protect themselves and others

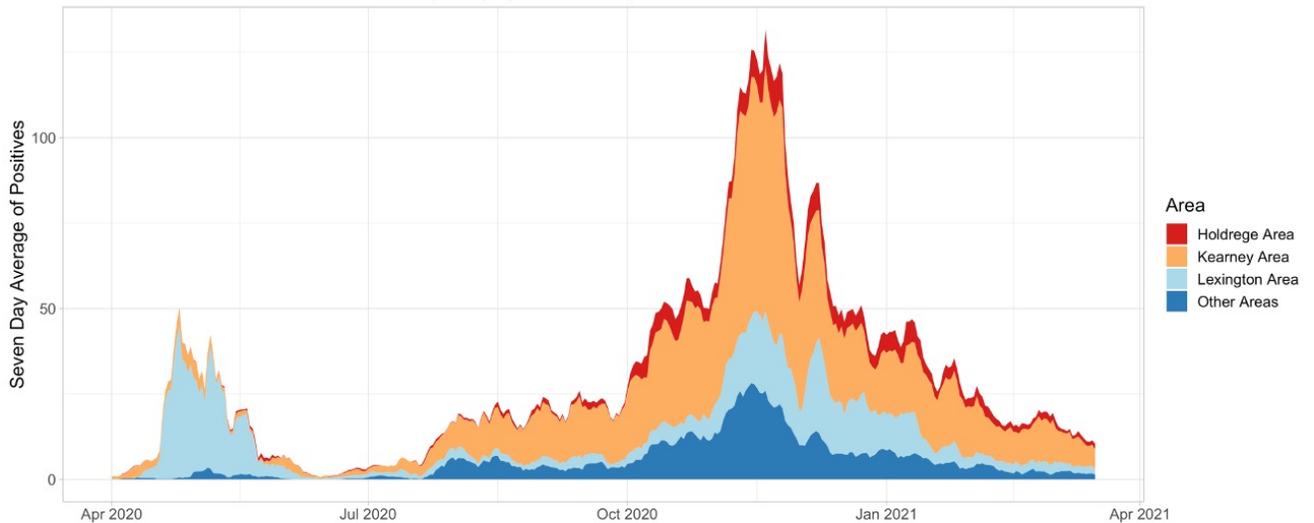
¹ For complete explanation of data sources, please see appendix 1
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- The graph below describes daily COVID-19 cases in TRPHD from **April 1 - March 16** broken down by **urban area** (**Holdrege, Lexington, Kearney and all others**). The height of the graph corresponds to the daily case count and the thickness of each colored band corresponds to the urban area's contribution.
- The second graph describes the 7-day rolling average of COVID-19 cases in **Lexington, Kearney and Holdrege** cities from **April 1- March 16**.

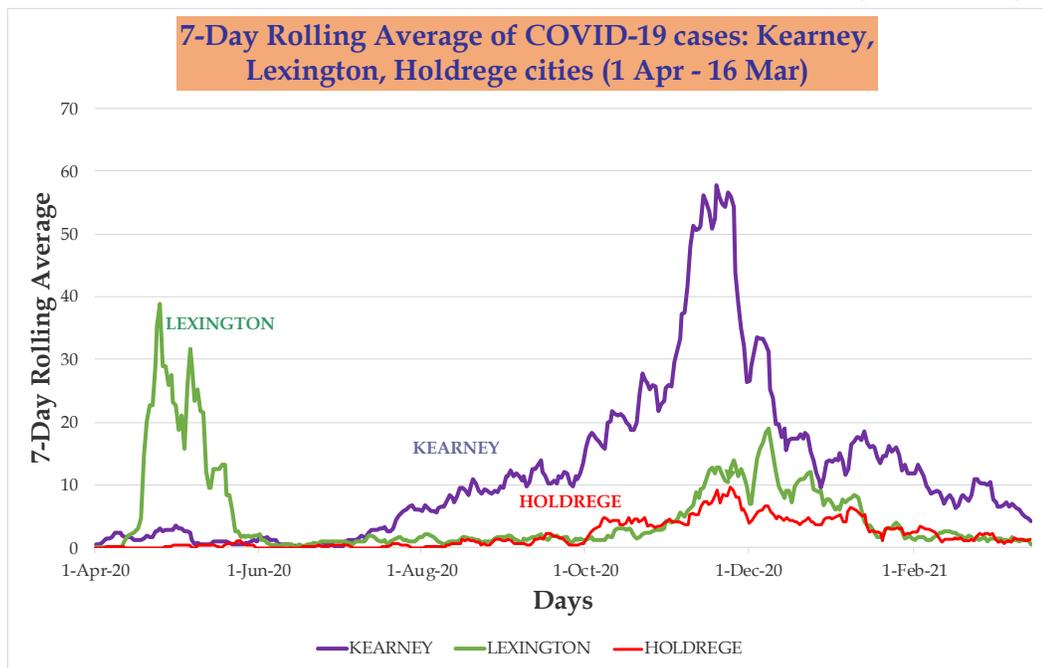
**7 Day Rolling Average of COVID-19 Cases
by area**

Graph displays data from April 1st to March 16th



Information Updated as of 3/16 at 8 p.m.

7-Day Rolling Average of COVID-19 cases: Kearney, Lexington, Holdrege cities (1 Apr - 16 Mar)





- The graph below shows COVID-19 cases in **Holdrege** area from **July 1 – March 16**, describing positive cases by city. The height of the graph corresponds to the daily case count and the thickness of each colored band corresponds to a city's contribution.
- The second graph describes cases by age during the same period in the **Holdrege** area. The height of the graph corresponds to the daily case count and the thickness of each colored band corresponds to each age group.

7 Day Rolling Average of COVID-19 Cases by City

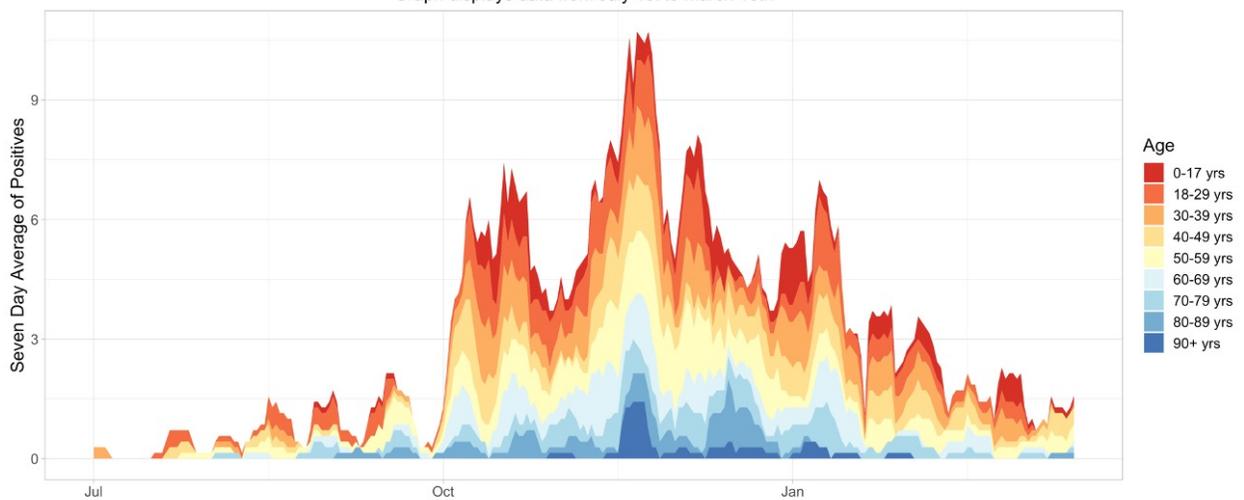
Graph displays data from July 1st to March 16th



Information Updated as of 3/16 at 8 p.m.

7 Day Rolling Average of COVID-19 Cases by Age in Holdrege Area

Graph displays data from July 1st to March 16th



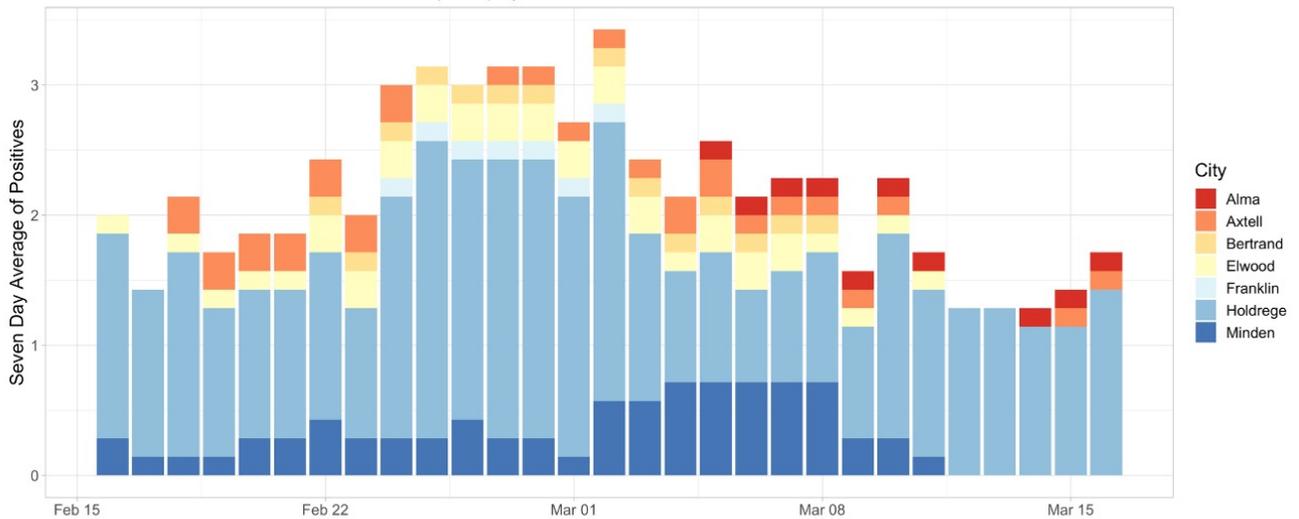
(Holdrege area includes Holdrege, Loomis, and Funk)



- The graph below shows COVID-19 cases across 7 cities in **Franklin, Gosper, Kearney and Phelps** counties from **Feb 16 - Mar 16**. The height of the bar corresponds to the daily case count and the thickness of each colored band corresponds to a city's contribution.
- The second graph describes cases per 10,000 residents in cities from these counties during this time period. **Holdrege** is represented by the light green line.

**7 Day Rolling Average of COVID-19 Cases
Gosper, Franklin, Kearney, and Phelps County**

Graph displays data from Feb 16th to March 16th



Information Updated as of 3/16 at 8 p.m.

**7 Day Rolling Average of COVID-19 Cases
Per 10,000 Residents by City (Fra/Gos/Har/Kea/Phe)**

Graph displays data from Feb 16th to March 16th



Information Updated as of 3/16 at 8 p.m.



Weekly Summary Report

Viewing the graphs from **April - February**, some broad trends are noticeable:

- Daily case counts of COVID-19 cases in Holdrege urban area have dropped steadily for the past month. See weekly COVID report at <https://www.trphd.org/covid-19/weekly-reports.html> for details.
- Holdrege urban area is recording less than seven new cases per week for the first time since late September.

On analyzing COVID cases from **July - February**, some details become clear:

- Although case counts have dropped overall, persistent detection of new cases among residents aged 65 years and over is concerning.

On analyzing COVID cases from **January - February**, we are able to observe:

- Case counts across all cities in Phelps, Franklin, Gosper, Harlan and Kearney seem to be following a decreasing trend.

In addition, an analysis of **healthcare and testing capacity** in Two Rivers Health District reveals:

- A little under half of ICU beds and over a third of all medical/surgical beds across the district are currently available, COVID-related admissions have accounted for 5% or less of all occupied beds for the past three weeks (see <https://www.trphd.org/> for details)
- Testing access through TestNebraska has contracted dramatically across TRPHD and is expected to do so in Phelps county also.
- Among Health Departments in Nebraska, TRPHD has vaccinated the highest proportion of its eligible population; as of March 17, almost 19% of the district's eligible population had been fully vaccinated. This is about 20% higher than the Statewide average.
- Over 30% of eligible residents of Two Rivers Health District have received at least one dose of the vaccine. Proportion of eligible population that has been fully vaccinated ranges from 23% in Kearney county to Phelps county at 13%. See the weekly vaccination report at <https://www.trphd.org/covid-19/vaccination-reports.html> for details

To conclude, daily COVID counts have dropped dramatically over the past two weeks in Holdrege urban area and across Phelps county. COVID-related admissions currently account for less than 5% of all medical/ surgical beds in TRPHD. Almost 19% of eligible residents in 7 counties in TRPHD have been fully vaccinated, the highest rate among health departments in the state. However, Phelps county has vaccinated the least proportion of its residents, only about 13% of eligible residents are fully vaccinated, compared to 23% in Kearney county. Those eligible for the vaccine are advised to contact their physician or register at Two Rivers Health Department (www.trphd.org). In the meantime, residents are advised to continue to adhere to strict preventive measures (social distancing, correct and consistent masking) at all times to protect themselves and others.



APPENDIX 1

Methods & Definitions

To better understand the course of the COVID-19 pandemic in Kearney, Lexington and Holdrege, we created ‘urban areas’ that included both the city and its surrounding towns. We included all towns within 20 miles of Kearney city, 15 miles of Lexington and 10 miles of Holdrege within each city’s urban area. The respective populations of all 7 counties in TRPHD are shown below. Kearney city accounts for over third of the population of TRPHD.

County	Population
Buffalo	49,659
Dawson	23,595
Franklin	2,979
Gosper	1,990
Harlan	3,380
Kearney	6,495
Phelps	9,034
TRPHD total	97,132
Nebraska state	1,934,408

Thus “Kearney area” includes Kearney city as well as Elm Creek, Pleasanton, Amherst, Riverdale, Odessa, Gibbon, Shelton and Axtell.

“Lexington area” includes Lexington city as well as Overton, Johnson Lake and Cozad.

“Holdrege area” includes Holdrege city, Loomis and Funk.

The populations of cities and villages is described below. Also included are Minden and Gothenburg, used as comparison points in descriptive statistics about the area.

CITY	POPULATION
Kearney	33867
Elm Creek	949
Axtell	751
Pleasanton	359
Riverdale	179
Amherst	253
Gibbon	1869
Shelton	1055
Odessa	130
KEARNEY URBAN AREA (TOTAL)	39412
Lexington	10115
Overton	567



Johnson Lake	600
Elwood	683
Cozad	3735
LEXINGTON URBAN AREA (TOTAL)	15,700
Holdrege	5408
Funk	183
Loomis	376
HOLDREGE URBAN AREA (TOTAL)	5967
Gothenburg	3489
Minden	2890

For presenting data, we selected 3 time frames:

- a) April 1 - current (From the beginning of the pandemic to most recent Tuesday)
- b) July 01 - current (From the beginning of second sustained 'wave' in daily case counts to current)
- c) Previous 4 weeks
 - Data is presented as 7-day rolling averages for daily numbers and absolute counts for cumulative cases. The 7-day rolling average is the sum of all cases reported on that day plus the previous six divided by 7.
 - Cumulative cases refer to all cases that have been confirmed in the district since the beginning of the pandemic in TRPHD (March 19)
 - Average positivity rate refers to a seven-day rolling average positivity rate, which is the sum of all cases for that day and the previous six divided by the sum of all tests done in that day and the previous six
 - Average positivity rate (in %) = (Sum of positive cases for current day + previous 6 days) / (Sum of total tests for current day + previous six days)
 - In cases that call for comparison across larger areas (counties v/s state of Nebraska, for eg), we present the count per 100,000 population. 100,000 roughly corresponds to the population of Two Rivers Health District (97,132)
 - In cases that call for comparison between cities, (Kearney v/s Minden for eg), we present a count per 10,000 population. 10,000 roughly corresponds to the population of Lexington (10,115), the second largest city in TRPHD.
 - For calculation, we use the 2019 mid- year estimate (American Community Survey, ACS) and data from The Atlantic's COVID tracking project (<https://covidtracking.com/data>)



APPENDIX 2

Cases per 10,000 population

Daily case counts are the **7-day rolling average** of cases expressed as a fraction of the population of the area, and standardized to 10,000 persons.

The total/ cumulative case counts are the **total** cases counted in an area (county, city, urban region or health district) from the first recorded case in the area (in case of TRPHD this is March 19, 2020). This is expressed as a fraction of the total population of the area and standardized to 10,000 persons.

10,000 is used while describing cities in Two Rivers District as it offers a rough mean value that is comparable across the populations of Holdrege (pop. 5408), Lexington (pop. 10115) and Kearney (pop. 33867).

Population numbers used are from the American Community Survey (ACS 2019 mid-year estimates). For further detail, see: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html>

7-Day rolling average/ 10,000 persons is calculated as:

$[(\text{Sum of case counts for the most immediate 7 days}) / 7] / (\text{mid-year population}) * 10,000$

Total cases/ 10,000 persons is calculated as:

$(\text{Total COVID cases}) / (\text{mid-year population}) * 10,000$

Cases per 100,000 population

Daily case counts are the **7-day rolling average** of cases expressed as a fraction of the population of the area, and standardized to 100,000 persons.

A population of 100,000 is used to compare urban areas (like Kearney urban area) as it is comparable to the overall population of Two Rivers Health District (97,032).

Population numbers used are from the American Community Survey (ACS 2019 mid-year estimates). For further detail, see: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html>

7-Day rolling average/ 100,000 persons is calculated as:

$[(\text{Sum of case counts for the most immediate 7 days}) / 7] / (\text{mid-year population}) * 100,000$



APPENDIX 3

About a third of all tests conducted since March in the district have been availed by residents or staff of residential facilities. “Residential facilities” include long-term care facilities, in-patient psychiatry services, retirement villages, veterans’ homes and correctional facilities within Two Rivers Health District.

Considering the specific nature of COVID risk of long-term residents of institutional facilities and taking into account the frequent testing performed at facilities, we present numbers separately for long term care facilities and others in the district.