



Holdrege Urban Area - COVID-19 Status Report 20 Nov 2020

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. The largest urban areas are Holdrege (~5439 people), Lexington (~10,024 people), and Kearney (~33,835 people), meaning that over half of the residents of TRPHD live in three urban areas, and over a third live in Kearney city alone.

To better understand COVID transmission in TRPHD¹, we decided to analyze case numbers in Kearney, Lexington and Holdrege, defined as the city and surrounding smaller towns

- “Kearney area” includes Kearney city, Elm Creek, Pleasanton, Amherst, Riverdale, Gibbon, Shelton and Axtell.
- “Lexington area” includes Lexington city, Overton, Johnson Lake and Cozad.
- “Holdrege area” includes Holdrege city, Loomis and Funk.

In the fifth edition of this document, we will

- a) Look at the overall course of the COVID-19 pandemic in TRPHD from **April - November** (33 weeks) and identify the outbreaks in each of the three urban areas.
- b) Analyze the total (cumulative) COVID-19 cases in **Lexington, Holdrege and Kearney** cities, comparing the total cases by 10,000 population in each city ²
- c) Describe 7-day rolling average of cases in **Holdrege** area by age and city of residence from **July 01 - November 17**.
- d) Describe the 7-day rolling average of COVID-19 cases from **Oct 20 - Nov 17** (4 weeks) across cities in **Franklin, Gosper, Kearney and Phelps** counties. Present the same case counts/10,000 persons for all cities with populations over 1100 people.
- e) Present a brief weekly overview and analysis for **Holdrege**.

In summary, Holdrege city and Holdrege urban area are showing sustained increase in COVID-19 cases since early October. A little under half of all cases recorded in Holdrege area were reported in the past four weeks. Positivity rate among persons aged 65 and over was more than 40% in this period. Healthcare services in Two Rivers District are rereporting increased COVID-related hospitalizations, and ICU availability is about half the previous 3 month average. Residents are advised to exercise utmost caution and adhere to strict preventive measures (social distancing, correct and consistent masking) at all times to protect themselves and others.

¹ For complete explanation of definitions and data sources, please see appendix 1

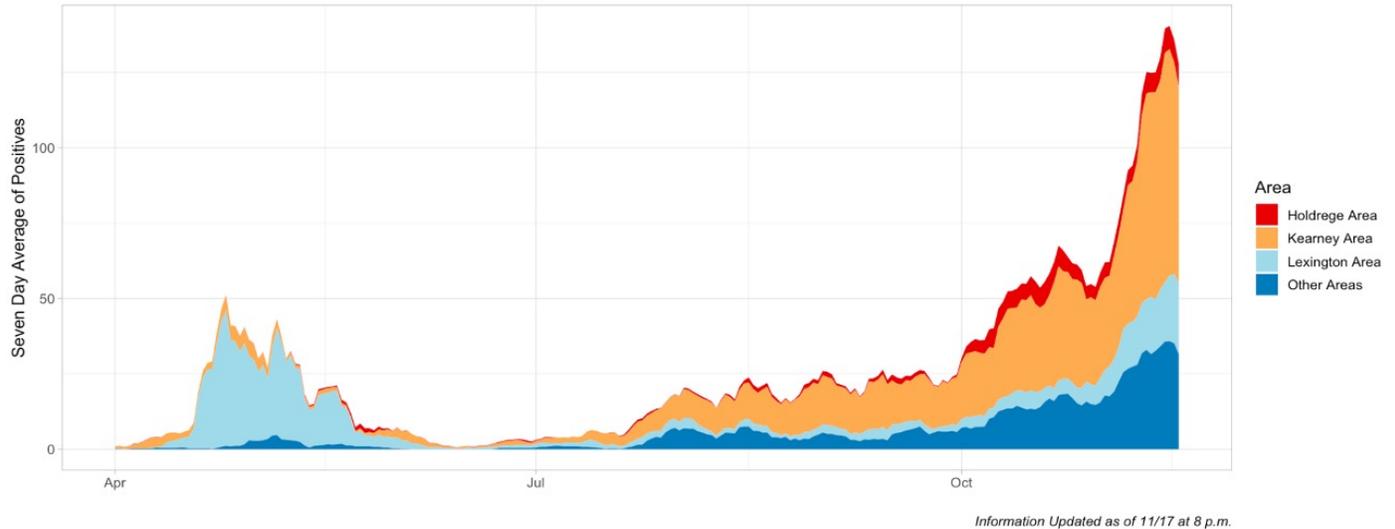
² For complete explanation of definitions and data sources, please see appendix 2



- The graph below describes daily COVID-19 cases in TRPHD from **April 1 – November 17** 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.

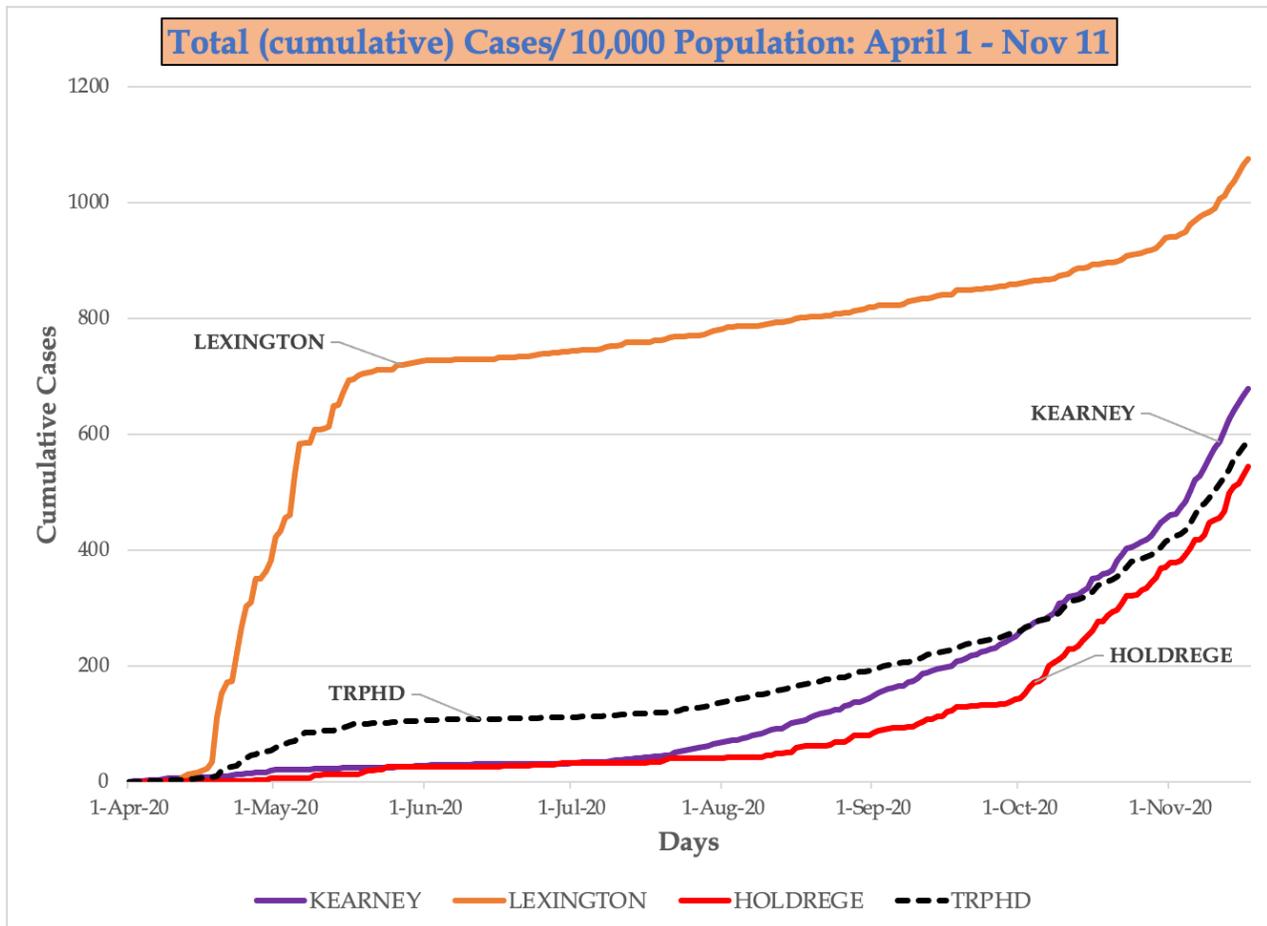
7 Day Rolling Average of COVID-19 Cases by area

Graph displays data from April 1th to November 17th





- The graph below describes the total (cumulative) cases/10,000 persons in **Lexington, Kearney and Holdrege cities** from **April 1- November 17**. The graph tries to estimate what proportion of each city would have ever tested positive were its population equal to 10,000 (about the size of Lexington). The graph presents the same numbers for Two Rivers Health District for reference.

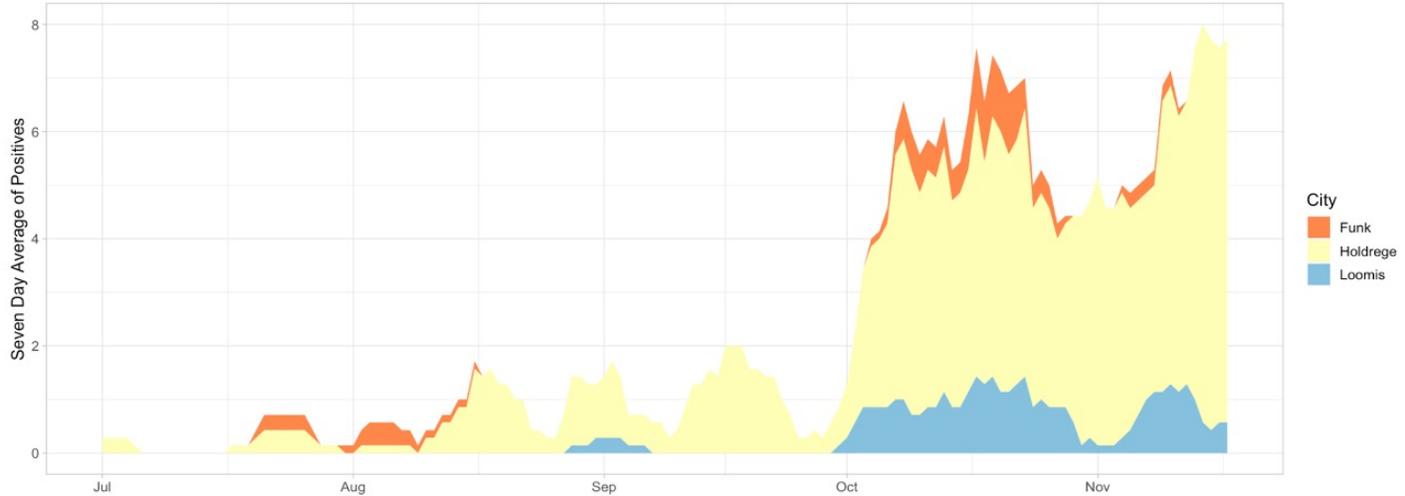




- The graph below shows COVID-19 cases in **Holdrege** area from **July 1 – November 17**, describing positive cases by city. The height of the graph corresponds to the daily case count and the thickness of each colored band corresponds to a city's contribution.
- The second graph describes cases by age during the same period in the **Holdrege** area.

7 Day Rolling Average of COVID-19 Cases by City

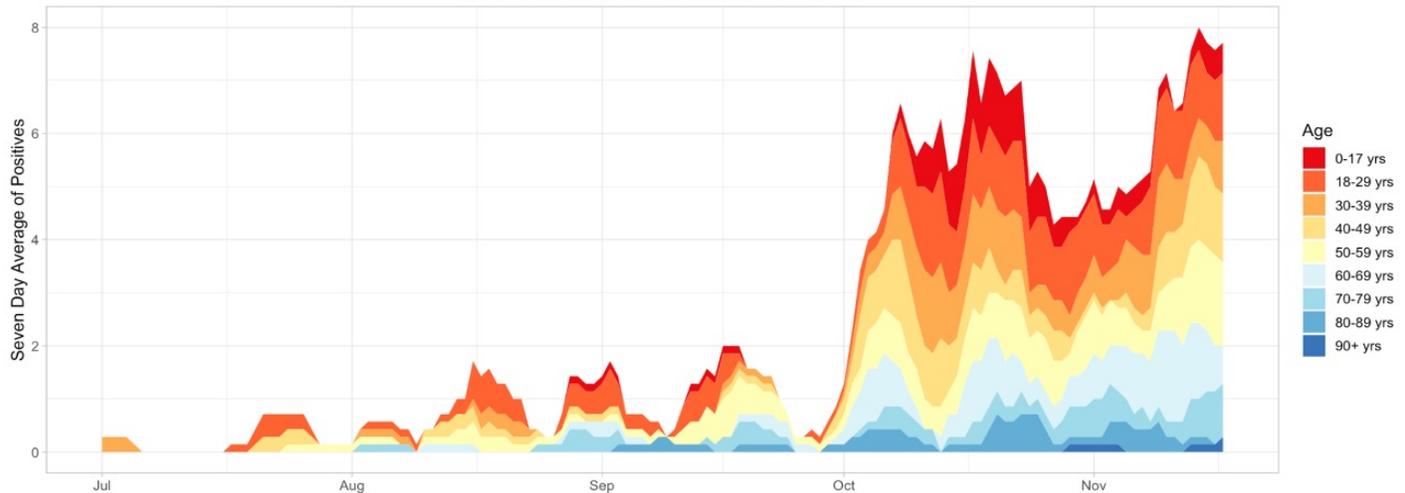
Graph displays data from July 1th to November 17th



Information Updated as of 11/17 at 8 p.m.

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

Graph displays data from July 1th to November 17th



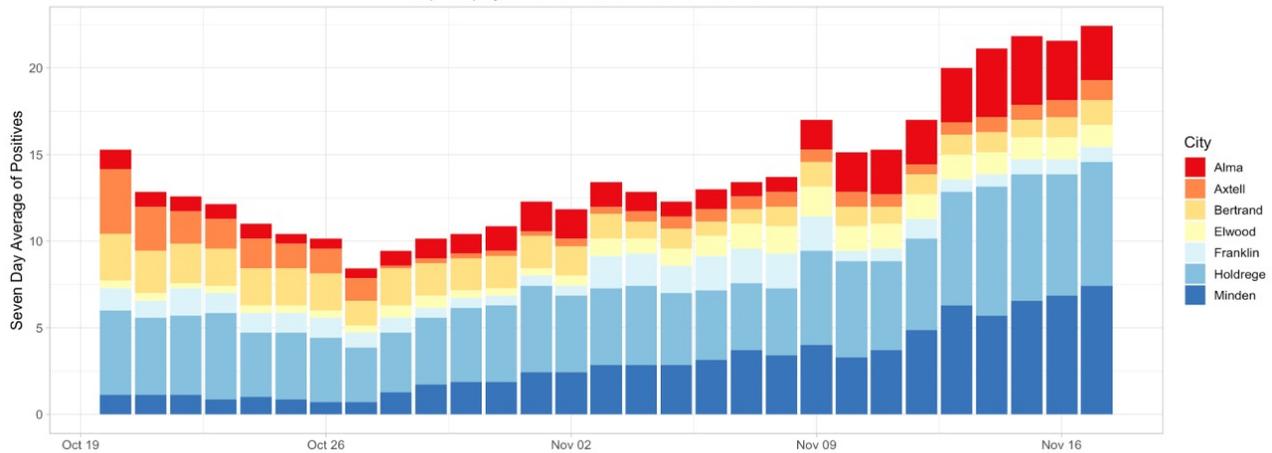
(Holdrege area includes Holdrege, Loomis, and Funk)



- The graph below shows COVID-19 cases across 9 cities in **Franklin, Gosper, Kearney and Phelps** counties from **Oct 20 - Nov 17**. 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 with population >1100 during this time period.³ **Holdrege** is the light blue line near the center of the y-axis.

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

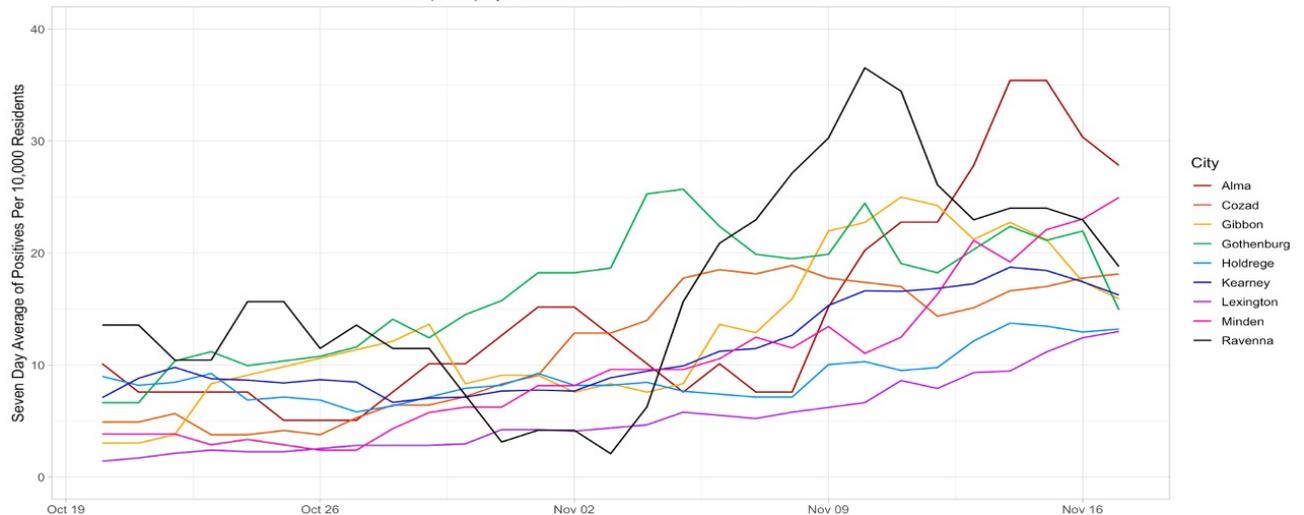
Graph displays data from October 20th to November 17th



Information Updated as of 11/17 at 8 p.m.

**7 Day Rolling Average of COVID-19 Cases
Per 10,000 Residents in Cities > 1,100 Residents**

Graph displays data from October 20th to November 17th



Information Updated as of 11/17 at 8 p.m.

³ Note: We have used 10,000 residents as reference population to better compare cities across the district.



Weekly Summary Report

Viewing the graphs from **April – November**, some broad trends are noticeable:

- Increase in daily case counts across the Holdrege area is lesser in magnitude compared to other urban areas, but the rate of growth is still very high.
- The rate of increase of cumulative cases per 10,000 population started to show a clear upward trend in early October which seems to continue to hold for now.
- Over 43% of the total cases recorded since March (156/361) in the Holdrege area were reported in the past four weeks.

On analyzing graphs of COVID cases from **July – November**, some details become clear:

- Daily case averages in Holdrege city have increased while Loomis and Funk do not show increased incidence.
- Over a quarter of cases in the past two weeks have been over 60 years of age. Positivity rates among 40-60 year olds also continues to increase.

On analyzing graphs of COVID cases from **October – November**, we are able to observe the following:

- Daily case averages in Holdrege city have been rising over the past month
- This increase comes on the back of already increased incidence in the preceding two weeks, and is predicted to increase further in the upcoming weeks.
- Well over a third (136/368) of tests conducted in Holdrege city in the past 4 weeks were reported as positive.
- Over 40% (39/ 91) of people over the age of 65 in Holdrege area tested COVID positive in the past four weeks.
- Across Two Rivers Health district, ICU bed availability is less than 24%, over 40% of all occupied hospital beds are for COVID-19 patients.

In summary, Holdrege city and Holdrege urban area are showing sustained increase in COVID-19 cases since early October. A little under half of all cases recorded in Holdrege area were reported in the past four weeks. Positivity rate among persons aged 65 and over was more than 40% in this period. Healthcare services in Two Rivers District are rereporting increased COVID-related hospitalizations, and ICU availability is about half the previous 3 month average. Residents are advised to exercise utmost caution and 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, 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.

For presenting data, we selected 3 time frames:

- a) April 1 - Nov 10 (From the beginning of the pandemic to current)
- b) July 01 - Nov 10 (From the beginning of second sustained ‘wave’ in daily case counts to current)
- c) Oct 14 - Nov 10 (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 simply the sum of all cases for that day and 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
 - In cases that call for comparison across different areas (counties v/s state of Nebraska, for eg), we present the count per 100,000 population(except when explicitly stated). 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

Total (cumulative) cases per 10,000 population

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), expressed as a fraction of the 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 corresponds to the population of Holdrege (~5439 people), Lexington (~10,024 people), and Kearney (~33,835 people).

Populations 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>

The Total cases/ 10,000 persons is calculated as:

$$\text{(Total COVID cases in the city)} / \text{(mid-year population)} * 10000$$