

*[This is an unedited realtime transcript. I am a nationally-certified closed captioner, but this is not a certified transcript, it is to be used for informational purposes only -- Kathy Robson]*

>> Les: It's 7:45.

We're talking to a couple of representatives of the Carbon county Covid-19 incident management team.

We have with us Maggie Karas, good morning, Maggie, how you doing.

>> Maggie: Hey, good morning Les, doing well thanks.

>> Les: All righty.

You're the Covid-19 incident management team public information officer, correct?

>> Maggie: Yes, that is correct.

>> Les: And we have Kaci, Kaci, how do you pronounce your last name?

>> Kaci: Jansma.

>> Les: You're physician assistant for Riverstone health in Joliet and Bridger.

>> Kaci: Yes, sir, that's me.

>> Les: We have Kaci and Maggie. Give us the latest, Maggie, concerning the Covid-19 cases in Montana.

>> Maggie: Okay, Les.

This information comes to us from the Montana department of public health and human services.

And is updated each morning between 9:00 and 10:00A.M.

Can be found on our website at Carbonalert.org.

We've got a total of 404 total confirmed cases in Montana.

A total of six confirmed cases in Carbon county, Montana.

And it's important to note that one of those six cases has since recovered meaning there are currently five active cases in Carbon county.

One of the six positive cases is at a healthcare facility and five are in isolation at their homes.

Four of Carbon county's laboratory confirmed cases are household contacts and not considered community acquired. The other two are believed to have been acquired independently from outside of the community. We are still actively testing for Covid-19.

And the good news that we're looking at is 209 cases have recovered statewide in Montana. One case has recovered in Carbon county, that's the good news.

>> Les: That is good news.

>> Maggie: Yeah, yeah.

We've got to stay positive and celebrate those milestones.

>> Les: For sure.

Well, now, we have some information statewide and Carbon countywide.

Kaci, how about the Joliet-Bridger areas with the Riverstone health?

>> Kaci: We are gladly triaging anybody who is concerns about upper respiratory systems that they may be Covid-19 related.

Riverstone, especially our clinics out here, does not have the capacity as far as what's required for personal protective environment to do any testing.

So while we are triaging and making recommendations and prescribing tests, we are mostly sending our patients up to Beartooth for their testing so that these county citizens can still get their tests within the county, you know, if they meet the protocol and recommendations given out by the higher-ups.

We are seeing a lot of nonCovid upper respiratory things as well, and with the spread of all of those viruses and illnesses we're trying to keep traffic down in our clinic so we're getting a little creative with the way that we're seeing our patients.

That can include, I've done a couple of home visits when needed, we've done telephone appointments.

We're still trying to treat as much as we can while respecting the social distancing recommendations.

>> Les: Doctor visiting your house happened in years.

[Chuckling]

>> Kaci: You know, in a dire straits, we'll gladly do it. We're trying to do our best to keep really good tabs and really take good care of our patients. When necessary, we've done it for our more fragile patients.

>> Les: There are those fragile patients out there as well for sure.

The older patients that of course are more susceptible, those people who have other issues as well.

>> Kaci: Right.

>> Les: Anything that you could use that maybe our listeners could help out with, Kaci?

>> Kaci: You know, I think the state and the government officials have done a really good job taking care of us as far as the statutes and the recommendations that have come down.

Montana has been a little bit ahead of the curve as compared to some of the other states and that's showing in our numbers. We've got low counts, we're plateauing nicely.

Some of the other states who have not been issued such rigid shelter-in-place orders are continuing to see the numbers rise.

I think that it's really important that while it's really difficult to isolate and stay home and that brings a burden, it's really important that people respect those recommendations and stay six 76feet away from people when you're in public, and don't go socializing out in unnecessary situations.

Watch your hands, cough into the corner of your elbow.

People have been doing a really

good job.

We need to continue to put our heads down and work through it.

>> Les: All righty, sounds good. Montana seems to be, like you said, ahead of the curve, and it looks and sounds like we're doing pretty darned good.

>> Kaci: Yes, and I think there's a lot of new information that's continuing to kind of bubble to the surface as far as testing and who we're testing and how we're going about doing it.

I'm really proud of the way that our state is handling this pandemic.

The government officials have done a pretty great job in this uncharted territory.

>> Les: Kaci, you're doing a good job.

You must have been in radio before, have you?

>> Kaci: I have.

[Laughing]

my past life I had a radio station in we opening and I worked for the northern ag network for a few years.

>> Les: So you saw radio and you saw there was no money it in and you decided to go from there, right?

>> Yeah, it was kind of a side hustle for a while as I worked through school.

[Laughing]

for sure.

Kaci, appreciate it.

Maggie, back to you for this morning, are you testing for Covid-19 at Riverstone in Joliet -- the rest of the community, have you addressed that, Maggie?

>> I have a question some one asked for Kaci.

If some one was sick or had symptoms of Covid-19 but cause concerned about the cost of care could you help them.

>> Kaci: Potentially.

It depends on the individual patients' insurance plans.

Riverstone works on a sliding

scale.

A sliding fee scale.

Those who have little to no insurance or poor coverage or what have you.

And there's a lot of team members of mine who really specialize in giving access to good quality care to those patients who don't have adequate or any medical coverage.

While I can't speak to the cost of a Covid-19 test for the average person can I tell you that we're doing everything we can to reduce the costs of the testing and of the appointment that's needed to obtain that test.

>> Les: Okay, Maggie, sounds good.

Any other questions out there, Maggie?

>> Maggie: Yeah, there was one other question.

Are you still seeing patients for general or chronic health concerns that are not related to Covid-19.

And Kaci touched on that earlier.

If you could repeat that, Kaci, and then give us some specifics for the Joliet-Bridger area, what are you seeing in that area, how can people stay safe, be diligent, et cetera.

>> Kaci: We definitely want to encourage patients to still reach out to us or to whoever they seek care from in order to continue to take care of their chronic health concerns.

If I have a blood pressure patient who's noting chest pain and shortness of breath or fearful about going out into the community or coming into the clinic I want to know about that.

We're still finding nontraditional ways to care for those patients.

There's been some information in the general population about people not wanting to seek emergency care or nonCovid-19

urgent care.

We're really trying to encourage people to reach out to us.

For those kinds of situations.

We don't want to let the chronic health of our patients slide and lose the control and the health that we have maintained for so long.

We're having like I said earlier, doing telephone appointments, a ton of phone consultations with myself and my team of nurses, and we really want to emphasize that we're still here for the basic healthcare needs as well as for the Covid-19 stuff.

There's a lot of other viruses going on.

If you feel like you need an appointment or if you feel like you need to visit with myself or the nurse call the clinic ahead of time.

We have a ton of protocols on how we're triaging those patients and working on getting them the best care that we can while keeping them safe as possible.

>> Les: All right, sounds good. Maggie, we've got something that's going to be going on again today at 10:00A.M., isn't that right?

>> Maggie: Yes, the Carbon county Covid-19 incident management team has a Facebook live event today at 10:00. We do this every Thursday on our Facebook and Instagram channel. That's at Carbonalert, 10:00 on Facebook and Instagram today. We will have Jason Mahoney, our incident commander along with Tom Kohley, Jason will be on the Facebook live event as well as Sharon Norby, chief quality officer at Beartooth billings clinic, speaking to some of the specific measures Beartooth billings clinic is taking to keep patients safe, talking about supplies, just a lot of good information specifically to what's going on at Beartooth

billings clinic and how we're working hard to keep everyone safe.

So I guess with that, I might just want to wrap up with, let's celebrate the positives, while we're still practicing social distancing, follow the governor's directives and orders.

And just remember to go to Carbonalert.org for any updates.

>> Les: And don't forget Facebook live at 10:00A.M., give us that address again here for this morning.

>> Maggie: Yes, Carbon alert, that's the address for Facebook and instagram.

And then we post a lot of things, a lot of data, a lot of information and helpful links on our website which is Carbonalert.org.

>> Les: All righty, sounds like we're making some progress here in not only Carbon county but across the state as well.

>> We are.

Kaci, is there anything else you'd like to add before we wrap up here in the next minute or so?

>> Kaci: I just, I appreciate the opportunity to come on and visit with you guys.

I know anxiety and I'd like to encourage patients to look for opportunities to help your neighbors.

Our county has been doing a really beautiful job of that. And, again, I'm proud to be a citizen of this area.

Just encourage people to continue to be that helpful hand and practice kindness, even among the this chaos.

>> Kindness among the chaos, I look that.

>> Thank you.

>> Maggie: Les?

>> Les: Yes.

>> Maggie: I would like to just repeat one more thing for our residents out there in Carbon county.

Our incident management team is offering grocery delivery to those over age 65 or who have been confirmed with Covid-19 or need other -- meet certain requirements.

To sign up, call 406-445-7258. That will connect you with the delivery system for Carbon county.

>> Appreciate that, thanks for mentioning that.

Kaci, Maggie, appreciate that. And somebody called us, the first responders in the communication aspect of the Covid-19 update area, for Carbon county and surrounding counties, we appreciate that as well.

>> Maggie: You absolutely are. We appreciate you guys so much. And your service has been invaluable in our getting the message out to people throughout our region and beyond.

Thank you so much F.M. 99.