

COVID-19 Conversations with Community Partners

April 8, 2020

Questions and Answers

1. **Do we have any information to share on an anticipated peak for our counties and when would that be expected?**

Work is being done to increase testing capacity within the counties. This will increase the knowledge of how many people are impacted and know where we stand in terms of illness numbers.

2. **What should people do in anticipation of a peak (businesses)?**

Health care systems are working closely together to identify positive cases. When there is a positive case, then case investigation happens to identify potential exposure risks. This data from testing is what is needed to assess the impact of the illness in a community. In terms of preparation, the hospitals are also working through their own emergency plans in relation to surge capacity. We know that most people recover from COVID-19 but there are six to eight percent who become critically ill. The best preparation everyone can do is to stay home and minimize contact with people to avoid exposure. Businesses should also be screening employees for early signs of illness every day and adjusting work to ensure a 6 feet distance between staff. And think through how you can adapt if an employee becomes ill with COVID-19 and other staff must be quarantined for 14 days.

3. **Why isn't exposure site information being released?**

Exposure site information is released when we are unable to identify all potential close contacts and therefore there may be a need to release that information. When there is a positive case identified, the Health Department performs an investigation to identify close contacts and potential exposure areas. If the positive person had exposure areas where people impacted could not be identified, then we would release exposure site information. Because of the small geographic area and low testing numbers, the Health Department has to be careful not to release identifiable information. It is important to note that everyone is at risk every time they leave their homes.

4. **Short-term rentals are not essential service under the Governor's Executive Order, but who can enforce this?**

We believe there needs to be some clarification of the Governor's Executive Order to make sure that this type of usage is not allowed. Enforcement of Executive Orders are overseen by the Attorney General. If a person feels they have observed anyone violating the Executive Order, they can call the State's Attorney General's office, local sheriff's department or they can call the health department. In terms of the recent Public Health Emergency Order, if the health department finds that there is a complaint that is significant enough to go against the Order, we would contact law enforcement.

5. **What about parks and recreational facilities?**

Different recreational facilities are governed by various agencies. Various parks and recreational areas have closed in some areas. Conversations are happening with community partners who govern those facilities to determine any protective measures that need to happen. The more that crowding is seen on recreational trails and at parks, the greater the risk for those sites to be closed.

6. **Are health officials in the area able to identify peak crises in this area vs. what is happening in the State?**

The predictive modeling that the State is using is being developed by university researchers. Currently, we do not have access to anything different than what the State is using. In order for predictive modeling to be effective in our area specifically, we need to have more data and that is achieved through testing. Testing data is used to understand the course and peak of this illness.

7. **It has been determined that COVID-19 can remain viable on metal surfaces for several days. Is it prudent to close playgrounds with swing sets, etc. to protect children and families?**

Yes. People should not be using public playgrounds at this time. If any are open, that would be a concern for potential spread. Different agencies oversee playgrounds within their entities. Closure signs should be placed around such playgrounds to avoid usage.

8. **What about visits to a chiropractor's office? Would they be considered emergent?**

Chiropractors fall under the umbrella of health care professions. The Health Department is not able to determine what treatment is emergent or not. Many providers are changing who they see for services, but it is up to the provider to determine if the service is an emergency or not.

9. **It was noted by one caller to encourage community organizations to share information on safe protocols when it comes to recreational activity and social distancing. Would hate to have public access sites closed because social distancing and other safety protocols were not being followed.**

10. **Has the Health Department received much feedback from businesses about the local the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department public health order that went into effect on Monday?**

There have been many phone calls and the majority have been very positive and supportive. Businesses want to make sure they are doing things right as they want to protect their critical infrastructure workers. The Health Department has provided guidance to businesses on what to do to keep workers safe which is available on the website (www.bldhd.org) and we would be happy to consult on questions as well.