

COVID-19 Conversations with Community Partners

May 27, 2020

Questions and Answers

- 1. There was an article in Record Eagle on May 25th, about the mysterious illness effecting children with COVID-19. Can you provide some more information regarding that? Are we doing any antibody testing?**

What we know is that children are not immune to COVID-19. It is being observed that some children are experiencing an immune reaction that is very similar to Kawasaki Disease. This type of disease can have long term effects on internal organs and blood vessels. Because this is a novel (new) virus, there is a lot of information that we do not know. When medical providers notice a pattern like a rash, fever and other COVID-19 symptoms, providers can treat appropriately.

Anti-body testing is a hot topic these days. Blood anti-body testing is used to focus on disease surveillance and helps with determining patterns in larger populations. One of the problems of anti-body testing for individual use is that the test does not tell the person how long they may be immune. There are also some reliability issues of the test. If a person does have an anti-body test done, make sure the test is being sent to a high complexity lab.

- 2. Does the Health Department have any guidance for high school graduations?**

The Health Department has been talking with various schools about their plans for graduations. We are happy to talk through school plans but do not have any true guidance. Keep in mind that any gatherings are still to follow the State regulations as explained in the Governor's Executive Orders. The Center for Disease Control did release some general guidance related to youth activities, sports, summer gatherings and other youth activities. This may be a resource people can look at. As always, school administration may call the Health Department to talk about what they are planning.

- 3. Is it safe to have family here from areas that have a higher number of COVID-19 cases? What about small children who have been in daycare?**

This is a very personal decision. It is advised to look at what area the family is coming from and then determine your family's risk. If you do have family visiting from out of the area, then continue to follow restrictions that are in place. The Health Department advises to keep activities at home and not go out in the community.

- 4. Wondering how non-compliant business issues, particularly hotels, are being handled?**

This issue of hotels has reached the State's Attorney General's office. The way the Executive Order is written, the responsibility lies with the traveler in telling the hotel the reason for the stay. The question of why they are staying is a very difficult issue especially those who are trying to do the right thing. It is very difficult to enforce the way the Executive Order is written.

- 5. What about businesses that have staff not wearing a mask?**

If the Health Department receives complaints, then we do a follow up with the business. The Health Department tries to educate the business on the reason for the requirements.

- 6. Did Benzie or Leelanau counties have any instances similar to the one in Grand Traverse County where traveling visitors tested positive for COVID-19 while here?**

No, we did not have any positive tests reported to us over the holiday weekend. We will be watching over the next couple weeks for any increases in positive tests. Knowing we had an influx of visitors from areas with high exposure, we are going to monitor for increased positive cases.

7. Do have any information on when the State may allow short-term vacation visitors?

We do not know at this time. The Health Department does not receive advanced notice of changes in the Executive Orders.

8. Tom Ulrich from Sleeping Bear Dunes asked for any updates on continuing the Health Department advisory that states people moving to the area quarantine for 14 days.

The Advisory is still in effect, but it is currently being looked at. It becomes difficult for black-n-white regulations when you have people coming up for the weekend vs. people coming up to their summer homes.

9. Sleeping Bear Dunes did see several people out recreating in the Park over the holiday weekend. For the most part, people were behaving themselves and adhering to CDC practices.

10. Northwest Michigan Health Services, Inc is partnering with the Health Department in determining what is the best way to increase testing. The testing guidelines state anyone who wants to get tested, can be tested. People can contact NMHSI at 231-642-5292 for testing appointments. The testing site is located at 10767 E. Traverse Highway.

11. Does the business toolkit have the resources necessary for businesses to meet the required Executive Order training?

The Health Department has a task force working on this document. In terms of staff training, this may comprise of a series of video links which would be very user friendly. Once the Health Department document is completed, it will be shared for others to use.

12. How different are the new MIOSHA guidelines compared to the previous BLDHD Business Toolkit guidelines?

The Health Department is unaware of any MIOSHA guidelines. Our toolkit is aligned with the OSHA guidelines that align with the Executive Order. The Health Department will look at MIOSHA and see if there are any differences. Below is the link to the MIOSHA guidelines.

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/leo/leo_miosha_c19_workplace_guidelines_employee_690396_7.pdf

13. Because Northwest Michigan is a low testing area, is now the time where the public should just go get tested as a means of helping health officials move around the community?

Yes. Testing is the main source of data to better understand the pandemic impact. Testing helps to understand the disease itself and learn about asymptomatic carriers of the disease. As the pandemic has evolved, the reason and target of testing has changed. The State wants to see testing results through different demographics. Anyone who wants a test can get a test and the Health Department supports that. There are no guidelines of how often a person should be tested if they get a negative test. Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department is not doing any testing ourselves due to staff resources. We are working with NMHSI and other local medical providers in increasing testing capabilities.

14. Have you had much luck with farm workers getting tested?

We are doing some very targeted work with this population as they are considered a high-risk target group.

In closing, we would like to thank everyone for their time and efforts in keeping the community safe. The Health Department provides daily updates. If you would want to be added to our emailing list, please contact Michelle Klein at mklein@bldhd.org