

COVID-19 Conversations with Community Partners

May 6, 2020

Questions and Answers

1. **Why are we not tracking recovery numbers?**

We are just starting to track recovered cases but want to ensure that we can use a report to pull this information accurately each time. We will track this number in alignment with the State's definition of recovery which is 30 days from a diagnosis. However, we recognize that in reality, some patients have no symptoms less than 30 days, and some have symptoms that prolong even after 30 days. This is different for each person.

2. **At the end of 30 days are they tested to make sure they do not carry the virus?**

No, they are not retested. The most recent CDC guidelines recommend that if it has been ten days after the onset of symptoms or three days without a fever, then there is no need to retest. It isn't known exactly how long someone may continue to test positive for COVID-19 after they have recovered.

3. **Positive cases are reported in counties that the patient lives in. Can we see positives case numbers for someone who is visiting here?**

When a test is done, the address given at the testing site as the patient's residence is what goes into the data base. However, the Health Department does receive testing data from testing sites so we would be aware if someone visiting our area tested positive.

4. **What is the percentage of false positives and of false negatives?**

We do not know that information with the different testing methodology being used and continually being studied. Most of the approved testing methodology currently in use was approved under an Emergency Use Authorization by the FDA which means that it was put into use before all of the usual steps for approval were completed. This was necessary given the rapid growth of the pandemic throughout our state and country. The State's goal is to increase the testing so we can continue to gather data about testing, cases, and disease patterns.

5. **In regard to masking:**

There are different types of masks out there and different uses for those masks. The only mask that protects an individual against COVID is an N-95 mask and these masks are being reserved for medical personnel. Surgical masks are a medical grade mask and they are being used by health care workers working with patients that are not sick. Surgical masks as well as cloth masks protect those around us from us by containing our own respiratory droplets. If we all did this, then we are protecting each other. The main difference between the use of surgical and cloth masks in the current scenario is that the surgical is disposal and can be thrown away. It is recommended that cloth masks be washed on a regular basis. More information on masks can be found by clicking the following link: http://www.bldhd.org/local/upload/file/Face_Coverings_Guidance_for_non-healthcare_workers_Final_685949_7.pdf

6. **Some people had visited Menards recently and were shocked that people were not wearing masks and lack of enforcement of the Governor's rules about distancing. What should people do when people see this type of violation?**

This is a question that is coming into the Health Department a lot. We see a barrier with people having access to masks in which we are trying to address. The Health Department is asking for masks to give to community members who may not have access to a mask. Whatever we can do as a community to get masks out to the public, the better. In terms of stores with corporate structures, we have heard complaints about stores who may not be following the rules and may be struggling with how to address the public entering stores. We recognize this is a difficult situation and if we get specific complaints, we will work with the store to implement best practices to comply with the Governor's Executive Orders. If a consumer has concerns, it would be very

appropriate to ask to speak to the manager of the store. People can also complain directly to the Governor and State Attorney General through their websites or are welcome to call our public health information line at 231-882-2197. We see an opportunity to highlight stores that are implementing best practices to the general public.

7. Parents with a graduating senior, is the Health Department going to be involved in the planning of commencement exercises? What about people coming into the community to see graduation ceremonies?

While we don't know what types of gatherings will be allowed and when, the Health Department is always happy to be available for consultation in planning for protective measures. We are continually revising our toolkits as new sectors of business and activities are allowed and may to help answer questions when planning those type of activities. Our business toolkit can be found here:

http://www.bldhd.org/local/upload/file/BUSINESS%20TOOLKIT%204_28_2020.pdf In regard to people coming into the community, the same principles that are found in the Travelers and Return Residents toolkit should be followed. <http://www.bldhd.org/local/upload/file/Returning%20Residents%20Toolkit.pdf>

8. The Leelanau County League of Women Voters and Glen Lake Association were able to send the Business tool kit along with the Travelers toolkit to several people. Encourage others to share those toolkits as well. They are available on our website at www.bldhd.org or click on the links found in Question 7.

9. Summer camp as normally done is not the possibility this year, but we are working with the Health Department. When will we know if we can sleep people together in a cabin?

Congregate living settings present one of the highest risk scenarios and will likely not be allowed until later in the pandemic phases. Although we don't know exactly the role of children in the spread of COVID-19, we do know that kids often tend to play a key role in the spread of other respiratory viruses. We are being very cautious in giving advice to summer camps as we do not know what the State will allow.

10. Is there an ad campaign about what caring for others look like?

France several years ago did an advertising campaign to demonstrate what caring for others look like. An advertisement of someone walking down the street practicing safe distancing, etc. Help share factual information to help stop the spread of misinformation which increases fear. Sometimes people need to see it to do it ie: "I care for others so I wear my mask and keep my distance". We will consider future messaging similar to this.

11. What about churches? Do you think that they will be able to meet outdoors during the summer?

We believe it will eventually be allowed with protective measures such as limited numbers of attendees and social distancing.

12. In regard to people that have special needs or need special attention. Any suggestions to better implement social distancing when it cannot be achieved? What about the homeless population and their situations?

If you have individuals that you are working with that are homeless, especially if they are affected by COVID-19 we would like to talk with you on an individual basis. There are resources available that the Health Department may be able to help with, such as the Community Connections program. Another resource for the homeless population is the NMCAA housing hotline 844-900-0500. If you have to get closer than six feet to help a person with their basic needs, use PPE, especially a mask, and try to keep the time of close contact to less than ten minutes.

13. Winds, does the six-foot rule extend to a larger physical distance, if the wind is blowing hard?

There are a lot of factors that go into the six-foot rule. Best practice would be wearing a mask when out in public. It is also important to move around frequently. Standing still, especially downwind, could present a risk for exposure to respiratory droplets.

14. It was mentioned that the Northwest Michigan Health Services, Inc. still has capacity for testing. The hotline number is 231-642-5292 to get a test scheduled.

15. What about shared bathrooms in a public space?

We are going to have to live in a new normal that includes COVID-19. We will not be able to eradicate the virus, but we have to do the best to minimize the risk knowing that we will not be able eliminate it. The non-pharmaceutical interventions such as hand hygiene, masking, social distancing, and cleaning with disinfectants frequently will all be a part of a new normal. Those responsible for public restrooms should be considering how they can maintain safety, perhaps stocking disinfectant wipes with instructions for their use by each person using the space. We need to move forward in the safest way possible and this will likely include protective measures such as these.

16. It was mentioned that the Department of Health and Human Services has an Emergency Relief Program that can assist with security deposits and first month's rent if income eligible. Applications are available online or paper applications are available in the Traverse City office is just inside the door.

17. Has there been an update in the modeling of expected cases in rural settings in Michigan being developed by University of Michigan.

The COVID Act Now website (<https://www.covidactnow.org/>) shares important information about they type of data that is looked at for modeling. Unfortunately, many counties in Northern Michigan do not have enough data available to accurately conduct that type of modeling.

18. Have there been any further developments or studies on immunity?

We create natural immunity when exposed to microbes which help us in the long run. Disease surveillance is an important role in monitoring diseases and fully understanding what protects us from them, including immunity. As we reopen and reengage, there will be more surveillance happening which will aid in future studies as well as further development of testing methodologies.

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