

**Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department  
Community Partner COVID Call 5/13/2020**

**1. Will there be any guidance distributed regarding COVID-19 sick leave?**

We are working on revising the business toolkit and will include information on the CARES act and protective administrative measures to insure everyone has this information.

**2. Are wearing masks and continuing social distancing likely to be continued recommendations?**

There are good signs that things are improving, however without a vaccine the only prevention we have are non-pharmaceutical measures such as social distancing and mask wearing. These protective measures will be part of our new normal.

**3. Interlochen public radio announced that we had a spike, which was not accurate. How can we prevent this misinformation from happening?**

This appears to have been a miscommunication during an interview between a testing facility and the interviewer. It was not something the Health Department was involved in until the mistaken information was reported to us. However, once we were notified we contacted the testing agency and they worked with IPR to correct the information.

**4. What are the recommendations for the use of Plexiglass barriers vs face masks vs face shields?**

You need to consider what activities being conducted and what other measures are in place. Face shields have openings that are not as protective as a mask but are a suitable alternative for those who can't wear a mask. If very high risk for exposure (such as in health care) both a mask and a face shield are worn. Physical barriers are options that many businesses are looking at and are adequate for one on one interactions. However, if there is a line of people on either side of the barrier a mask needs to be worn as well as exposure can occur around the sides of the barrier.

**5. Is there guidance on the health department's website for how to safely remove and take care of a mask? Can you put a mask in a 160 degree oven to sanitize it?**

We will ensure that mask care instructions are available on our website.

There are some health care settings that are using moist heat/incubators to sanitize medical grade N-95 masks, however there are no recommendations for the general public to use their personal ovens for this purpose. Washing with soap and water in your laundry is the recommended cleaning for cloth masks.

**6. Are there any guidelines for hotels, resorts, or short term rentals?**

There is no guidance from the state as of yet. Vacation travel and short term rentals for purposes other than COVID response continue to be prohibited currently. As different sectors of business open up we will continue to tailor guidance for those sectors.

**7. What is the message for our area residents who are growing weary of quarantine?**

The news about decreasing cases and low exposure risk in our region is great news and a reason for cautious optimism. It means it is likely OK to slowly and carefully open up more sectors. However we know that gatherings of people increases the risk and we are likely to see increased cases as we are exposed to people from other areas. The state is using data to make decisions about how quickly we move from one phase to the next. As they open some activities, they are using the 2 week incubation period to make decisions about the next phase.