

PHYSICIAN UPDATE



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COVID-19 AND INFLUENZA UPDATES

As you are aware, COVID-19 activity continues at a high transmission level in our region, state, and nation. You can review current community levels and transmission levels at the [Michigan MI Safe Start Map](#). Current CDC Guidelines for healthcare facilities still recommend masking during patient encounters if [Transmission Levels](#) are “High.”

The new Bivalent COVID Booster vaccine (both Moderna and Pfizer) is now available for everyone 5 years of age and older and is recommended for anyone as a booster dose if it has been at least two months since their last dose. Those who have recently been infected with COVID may consider waiting 3 months before getting their booster. The vaccine can be given at the same time as other vaccines such as Influenza Vaccine.

[CDC Clinical Considerations](#)

INFLUENZA

Influenza activity is currently sporadic in our area, but it is increasing in other parts of the country. Given the very mild flu seasons the past two years and the moderate/severe flu season just experienced in the Southern Hemisphere, we may see higher than average flu impacts this season.

Vaccination is still the best way to reduce your risk of influenza, and new this year is the CDC/ACIP preferential recommendation that persons 65 years and older receive either a high dose or adjuvanted flu vaccine (Fluzone High Dose, Fluad, or Flublok). If none of these vaccines are available at time of administration, they can and should receive any other age-appropriate flu vaccine.



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JOSHUA MEYERSON, MD
220 W. GARFIELD
CHARLEVOIX, MI 49720
j.meyerson@nwhealth.org
231-547-7679

IMMUNIZATION NEWS

Updates to adult immunizations include Shingles, Pneumonia, and Hepatitis B

[Shingles Vaccine is now recommended](#) for immunocompromised individuals 18-49 years of age, in addition to everyone at least 50 years old. There are no booster recommendations for Shingrix, so individuals who have received the two-dose series are complete.

HEPATITIS B VACCINE IS NOW
UNIVERSALLY RECOMMENDED
FOR ALL PEOPLE THROUGH
AGE 59, AND FOR THOSE 60 AND
OLDER WITH RISK FACTORS FOR
HEPATITIS B.

Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (either PCV15 or PCV20) is now recommended as the initial pneumococcal vaccine instead of Pneumovax PPSV23, which can still be offered when PCV 15 is given. The recommendations vary depending on product, age, and risk factors. See [CDC Pneumococcal Vaccine Timing for Adults](#) or [download the CDC app](#) for a very user friendly guide.

Adults who are under-insured or uninsured can receive recommended vaccines at no cost through the Adult Vaccine Program through local FQHC's or the local health department.

If you'd like an update for your practice on immunization recommendations, I am available to provide a 1-hour CME eligible update on various immunization topics to meet the needs of your provider group. You can reach out to me directly, or for more information, go to the [MDHHS website](#) or link through to review this [brochure](#).



STI UPDATES

Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, and Syphilis are the main reportable sexually transmitted infections and are among the most common infections reported to the local health department. While chlamydia rates have remained relatively stable nationally and statewide, Gonorrhea (up 45% from 2016) and Syphilis (up 52% from 2016) rates have risen significantly – with a 235% increase in congenital syphilis.

<https://www.cdc.gov/std/statistics/2020/default.htm>

Initially, many of the syphilis cases were in males who reported sex with other males. We are now also seeing reports of heterosexual spread and the increase in congenital syphilis. In addition, Kalamazoo County reported three individuals (two women) with early ocular neurosyphilis.

CDC Screening recommendations include testing for syphilis at first prenatal visit and to retest at 28-32 weeks.

Testing for Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, and Syphilis is available at the local health department, as well as treatment of cases and contacts at low or no cost to individuals. In addition, reproductive health services are available, including contraception, condoms, and HIV testing.

MONKEYPOX NUMBERS

The global outbreak of Monkeypox continues, but [nationally](#) and [in Michigan](#), we are seeing a downward trend in cases – suggesting the possibility of controlling the outbreak and preventing it from becoming endemic in our region. While northern Michigan has only had a single case of Monkeypox reported from Grand Traverse County, health departments continue to provide vaccination to those at risk. [The Monkeypox Field Guide Released by American College of Emergency Physicians](#) is a resource to help providers gain awareness for diagnosis and management.

The Jynneos vaccination is available for anyone recently exposed to or are [at risk for Monkeypox](#). Although anyone can contract the virus if exposed, men who have sex with men represent most cases, especially those with a history of an STI in the last year or are living with HIV.

Individuals at risk can contact their local health department to schedule vaccination. There is also a limited supply of TPOXX – Tecovirimat – for treatment for those at increased risk for severe disease. Information on ordering TPOXX through the national stockpile is available [here](#).

LEAD POISONING PREVENTION

In May 2022, the Centers for Disease Control updated its blood lead reference value, or BLRV. This level is based on the 97.5th percentile of the blood lead values among U.S. children ages 1 to 5 years. While the BLRV has decreased from 5ug/dl to 3.5ug/dl, there is no safe level of lead.

Children whose capillary blood lead level is over 3.5 should have a confirmatory venous blood level. All children enrolled in Medicaid, and any child with risk factors, should be tested for lead at 12 and 24 months. If not previously tested, they should be tested once between the age 3 and 6 years. [Michigan BLL Quick Reference Guide for Primary Care Providers](#) is a helpful resource.

Lead poisoning is not common in our region but every year several children are identified through screenings. Data on the results is available through the [MDHHS MiTracking portal](#).

The last two years saw a significant decrease in lead testing related to closures and virtual care (as much as 50% decrease in testing rates). It is even more important to get our children back into the routine of well childcare services, including lead testing and immunizations.



WHILE THE BLRV HAS DECREASED FROM 5UG/DL TO 3.5UG/DL, THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL OF LEAD.

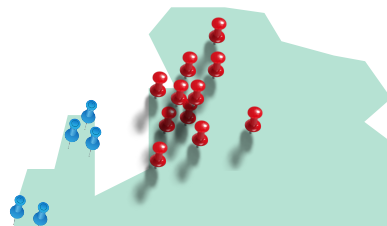
RISKS

Although contaminated drinking water has received much attention, by far the greatest risk in our region continues to be from living in or regularly visiting a home with lead paint (typically homes built before 1978). Other risk factors include children who have contact with an adult who works with lead in their occupation or hobby, such as firing ranges, stained glass, refinishing woodwork or furniture. Also, anemia/iron deficiency increases the risk of lead poisoning so maintaining good nutrition is imperative for all children.

SCHOOL NURSE NEWS

Since the Fall of 2021, health departments and local schools have partnered to reduce the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students, with the goal of keeping children in-person, in school. Due to the availability of funding for school-based health resources, public health nurses now have launched their second school-year of supporting students, families, staff and school leadership address the physical and emotional health needs of their school community.

Activities such as communicable disease prevention and harm reduction, health and wellness education, and support for students with chronic illnesses



Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department:

- Suttons Bay Public Schools
- Northport Public School
- Leland Public School
- Benzie County Central Schools
- Frankfort-Elberta Area Schools

are some of the cornerstone activities of school nursing. This, in addition to an expansion of School Wellness Programs (SWP) that place a nurse and mental health provider in schools, has expanded the number of schools in

Northern Michigan that can now give students onsite access to nursing care, behavioral health support, or both. In the BLDHD service area, there are 5 school nurses and 2 therapists serving 5 school districts; 1 SWP is located at Benzie County Central Schools. These professionals are placed by the local health departments and funded through MDHHS funds.

Nursing care including a nursing assessment, care planning, chronic care management and mental health referral require parental consent, unless confidential services are requested.

Communicable Disease Totals			
January 1, 2022-October 31st, 2022			
Disease	Benzie	Leelanau	Total
Novel Coronavirus COVID-19	1557	1710	3267
Campylobacter	3	4	7
Cryptosporidiosis	2	0	2
Giardiasis	0	1	1
Norovirus	0	22	22
Salmonellosis	0	4	4
Shiga toxin-producing E Coli	0	2	2
Shigellosis	0	1	1
Yersinia enteritis	5	1	6
Flu Like Disease*	90	18	108
Influenza	54	31	85
Meningitis - Aseptic	2	0	2
Meningitis - Bacterial Other	2	0	2
Streptococcus pneumoniae, Inv	1	0	1
Subtotal	5	0	5
Cyclosporiasis	0	1	1
Gastrointestinal Illness	15	40	55
Head Lice	10	8	18
Histoplasmosis	3	0	3
Strep Throat	9	9	18
Streptococcal Dis, Inv, Grp A	0	1	1
Rabies: Potential Exposure & PEP	2	3	5
Chlamydia (Genital)	20	30	50
Gonorrhea	4	7	11
Nontuberculous Mycobacterium	3	1	4
Chickenpox (Varicella)	2	0	2
H. influenzae Disease - Inv.	1	1	2
VZ Infection, Unspecified	1	0	1
Babesiosis	1	0	1
Ehrlichiosis, Anaplasma phagocytophilum	1	3	4
Lyme Disease	16	13	29
Hepatitis B, Acute	0	1	1
Hepatitis B, Chronic	0	1	1
Hepatitis C, Chronic	4	5	9



Dr. Joshua Meyerson serves as the Medical Director for three local health departments in northern Michigan -- Health Department of Northwest Michigan, Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department, and District Health Department #4. His duties also include leading two grant-funded, school-linked Child and Adolescent Health Centers in underserved rural school districts.

j.meyerson@nwhealth.org 231-547-7679