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Benzie-Leelanau
DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT
CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

PERSONAL HEALTH DIVISION

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For Immediate Release
January 17, 2022

State, federal governments to make COVID-19 tests available

Both the state and federal governments are stepping up measures to make COVID-19 home tests more readily available.

"It is welcoming to see tests or reimbursement for the tests becoming more accessible," said Lisa Peacock, Health Officer with the Health Department, "We want to ramp up access to testing since the fast-spreading Omicron variant is sending coronavirus case counts soaring."

At the state level, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced Friday that those with health insurance may take advantage of a new federal rule that requires health insurers to cover the cost of eight over the counter COVID-19 home tests per month. As insurers work to implement this new coverage, citizens should save receipts and boxes for COVID-19 tests purchased beginning on January 15, so they can submit them for future reimbursement, saving a family of four at least $384 a month.

Under the new rule, starting January 15, private insurers will be required to cover up to eight FDA-approved over-the-counter COVID-19 tests per month for each person covered by a health plan. Insurers may, but are not required to, cover tests purchased before January 15. Free COVID-19 testing is not limited to Michiganders with private health insurance. Consumers' out-of-pocket costs will vary depending on how the coverage is provided:

- **Through a network of preferred pharmacies or retailers**: If your insurer establishes a network of preferred pharmacies or retailers, you can get over-the-counter COVID-19 tests with no up-front costs at those locations. If you choose to purchase your tests elsewhere, your insurer is required to reimburse you up to $12 for those tests.
- **Through reimbursement:** If your insurer does not establish a network of a preferred pharmacies or retailers, you will have to pay up front for your tests, and your insurer will be required to reimburse you for the full purchase price of the covered tests.
- **Michigan Medicaid and MIChild:** Participants of these programs have coverage for FDA-authorized at-home COVID-19 tests.
- **If you do not have insurance**: People without insurance can also get tested for free at some community health centers. More information about COVID-19 testing for people without insurance is available on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website.

At the federal level, citizens can request free rapid coronavirus tests from the federal government beginning on Wednesday, Jan. 19. The website to process the requests, covidtests.gov, is up and running, but officials report there may be a delay in accepting orders and a lag in shipping.

Peacock noted that the largest increase in positive COVID-19 cases is occurring in the 20–39-year-old age group. "This is our workforce that is being affected and it's impacting our businesses as their employees get sick, or exposed, and have to quarantine," she said.

To protect yourself, you should:

1. Wear a mask when out in public settings correctly and consistently, whether fully vaccinated or unvaccinated, as an extra layer of protection. See the CDC's guide on masks here.

2. Get vaccinated and boosted. The safe and effective vaccinations are offered at a number of local pharmacies and at health department clinics. See a list of locations in Benzie and Leelanau County [here](#) or visit the health department website to see clinic schedules for 5-11 year-olds, and [12 and older](#) to self-schedule an appointment.
   a. Wondering if you are eligible to receive a booster? See the U.S. FDA graphic illustrating booster eligibility [here](#).

Vaccination continues to be our most powerful tool. The health department offers convenient COVID-19 vaccination clinics for all area residents and visitors 12 and older. Walk-ins are welcome at the health department's community clinics. Parent consent is required for minors. Anyone may call the Michigan COVID-19 hotline at 888-535-6136 if they have questions or are not able to find a time or date that works for them and/or their child. Clinics offer clients a choice of Pfizer, Moderna, or J&J's Janssen unless otherwise noted. Upcoming clinics for appointments only include

Tuesday, January 18th – Community COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic.
- VFW Post 7731, 7475 E Duck Lake Rd, Lake Leelanau, MI 49653
- Time: 1:00-5:00pm
- To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

Wednesday, January 19th – Community COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic.
- Platte River Association, 12990 Honor Hwy, Honor, MI 49640.
- Time: 1:00-5:00pm
- To schedule an appointment: [Click here](#)

Wednesday, January 19th- Leelanau's Pediatric COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic
- BLDHD Leelanau Office, 7401 E. Duck Lake Road, Lake Leelanau, MI 49653
- Time: 8:00-12:00 and 1- 4:30pm
- Appointments required
- Vaccine: Pfizer (open to 5-11 years old ONLY, parent/guardian must accompany minor)

The Disability Network is working with Honu Management Company to provide vaccinations for homebound/disabled individuals who cannot go to a vaccine site. Individuals seeking this service are to contact Lorna Teng at Disability Network: 231-922-0903, extension 1, or email [lteng@disabilitynetwork.net.](mailto:lteng@disabilitynetwork.net)

COVID-19 Testing
The health department is offering free COVID-19 testing with the support of HONU lab. The test is free, and no doctor's order is required. Pre-registration is not required, but it is recommended to reduce time spent at the testing clinic, and walk-ins are welcome. Testing is available:

Testing will be available as follows:
- Mondays and Thursdays, 10:00-3:00, VFW Post 7731, 7475 E Duck Lake Rd, Lake Leelanau, MI. To register for testing in Leelanau, [click here](#).
- Tuesdays and Fridays, 10:00–3:00, Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital, 224 Park Ave, Frankfort, MI 49635. The testing clinic is located in the trailer by the cardiac rehab entrance (lower-level parking lot). To register for testing in Benzie, [click here.](#)

*Note that lines may be longest at the beginning of the day and waiting outside may be necessary. Please dress accordingly.

COVID-19 Case Counts
The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department is reporting the following case information:
- On Tuesday, January 11, 60 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (25) and Leelanau (35).
- On Wednesday, January 12, 77 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (30) and Leelanau (47).
- On Thursday, January 13, 58 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (26) and Leelanau (32), and two new COVID-19 associated deaths in Benzie (1) and Leelanau (1).
- On Friday, January 14, 146 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (74) and Leelanau (72).

- On Saturday, January 15, 48 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (22) and Leelanau (26).
- On Sunday, January 16, 23 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (10) and Leelanau (13).
- Today, January 17, 68 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (38) and Leelanau (30).

As of 4:00 p.m. today, the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department is reporting:
- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 2,799, Leelanau– 3,040
- Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 461, Leelanau– 580
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 2,287, Leelanau– 2,423
- Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 51, Leelanau– 37
- Hospitalized: 299 total; 8 currently

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