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PERSONAL HEALTH DIVISION

For Immediate Release
November 29, 2021

New COVID-19 variant identified by World Health Organization ***No cases in US but prevention urged***

On November 26, the World Health Organization (WHO) classified a new variant, B.1.1.529, as a “Variant of Concern.” Named Omicron, no cases of this variant have been identified in the U.S. to date. The new strain is causing health officials to urge residents to use precautionary measures to curb the spread of COVID-19.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is following the details of this new variant, first reported to the WHO by South Africa. CDC officials expressed gratitude to the South African government and its scientists who have openly communicated with the global scientific community and continue to share information about this variant with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and CDC.

“We know what it takes to prevent the spread of COVID-19,” said Dr. Josh Meyerson, Medical Director for the Health Department. “Regardless of the strain, we all need to take preventative measures to stop the spread of this disease and keep ourselves, our families, and our communities safe.”

The health department, as well as the CDC recommends people follow [prevention strategies](#) such as wearing a mask in public indoor settings in areas of substantial or high [community transmission](#), washing your hands frequently, and physically distancing from others. CDC also recommends that everyone 5 years and older protect themselves from COVID-19 by getting [fully vaccinated](#). CDC encourages a COVID-19 vaccine booster dose for all those who are eligible.

Travelers to the U.S. should continue to follow [CDC recommendations for traveling](#).

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. 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, November 30th – Community COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic

- VFW Post 7731, 7475 E Duck Lake Rd, Lake Leelanau, MI 49653
- Time: 12:00-5:00pm
- Vaccine: Moderna, Janssen, and Pfizer (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor)
- To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

Wednesday, December 1st – Community COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic

- Crystal Cafe, 1681 Benzie Hwy, Benzonia, MI 49616
- Time: 12:00- 5:00pm
- Vaccine: Moderna, Janssen, and Pfizer (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor)
- To schedule an appointment: Check back soon. We are working on getting more appointments available.

Monday, December 6th- Benzie's Pediatric COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic

- BLDHD Benzie Office, 6051 Frankfort Hwy, Benzonia, MI 49616
- Time: 8:00-12:00 and 1- 4:30pm
- Vaccine: Pfizer (open to 5-11 years old ONLY, parent/guardian must accompany minor)
- To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

Monday, December 6th- Leelanau's Pediatric COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic

- BLDHD Leelanau Office, 7401 E Duck Lake Rd, Lake Leelanau, MI 49653
- Time: 8:00-12:00 and 1- 4:30pm
- Vaccine: Pfizer (open to 5-11 years old ONLY, parent/guardian must accompany minor)
- To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

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:

- On Monday and Thursday from 10 am – 3pm at the VFW Post 7731. To register visit: <https://honu.dxresults.com/AntigenSignup?LabId=2470>
- On Tuesday and Thursday from 10 am – 3pm at the Crystal Café in Benzonia. To register visit: <https://honumg.info/CrystalCafe>

COVID-19 Case Counts

The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department is reporting the following case information:

- On Tuesday, November 23, 57 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (22), and Leelanau (35), and one new COVID-19 associated death in Benzie County.
- On Wednesday, November 24, 43 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (17) and Leelanau (26), and one new COVID-19 associated death in Leelanau County.
- On Thursday, November 25, 28 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (13) and Leelanau (15).
- On Friday, November 26, 12 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (8) and Leelanau (4), and two new COVID-19 associated deaths in Leelanau County.
- On Saturday, November 27, 20 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (14) and Leelanau (6).
- On Sunday, November 28, 24 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (15) and Leelanau (9).
- Today, November 29, 18 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (9) and Leelanau (9).

As of 4:00 p.m. today, the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department is reporting:

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 2,081, Leelanau– 2,123
- Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 393, Leelanau– 397
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,648, Leelanau– 1,698
- Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 40, Leelanau– 28
- Hospitalized: 251 total; 15 currently

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