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## PERSONAL HEALTH DIVISION

**For Immediate Release**

**December 16, 2021**

### **Pfizer booster shot strongly recommended for anyone 16+**

As COVID-19 cases in northern Michigan – and across the state – continue to rise, officials with the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department are urging residents to use caution during holiday gatherings.

The latest COVID-19 data reported by the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department has been compiled into a report to show residents a picture of COVID-19 in the community. The [Case Trend Summary for November 8 – December 12](#) includes data for all cases and highlights the differences between unvaccinated and vaccinated cases. Key data points from the report for the 5-week period ending December 12 include:

- 1,118 total cases reported
- Of cases with a confirmatory COVID-19 test:
  - o 59.0% of cases were not vaccinated (cases that do not meet the criteria of a fully vaccinated individual)
  - o 68.5% of hospitalization were unvaccinated individuals
  - o 67% of COVID-19 deaths were unvaccinated individual

The number of cases continues to put pressure on health care systems, hospitals, businesses due to worker shortages, and schools and families.

Throughout the state, more than 55% of residents age 5 and older are fully vaccinated (two weeks following a two-dose Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, or one week following a Johnson & Johnson vaccine). As the fully vaccinated population has increased, so have the percentage of breakthrough incidents. [An infographic released](#) from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services illustrates when more people are vaccinated, more cases may still come from the vaccinated population.

However, the risk of infection, grave illness, and death remains significantly lower among the fully vaccinated. Munson Healthcare officials recently noted they are experiencing an unprecedented number of hospitalizations specifically due to COVID-19. Among these COVID-driven hospitalizations, many patients are being elevated to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), where they may require the support of a ventilator to assist with breathing difficulties. As reflected in current data, [the vast majority of patients who've been hospitalized at Munson Healthcare for COVID-19 are unvaccinated](#).

“Vaccination is still the best tool we have to moderate the impact of this pandemic,” said Dr. Josh Meyerson, Medical Director with the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department. “Vaccines protect us from severe disease. Booster doses have shown to further reduce the risk of disease and reduce infection rates. I encourage everyone to get vaccinated, including your booster dose as soon as you are eligible.”

In addition to getting vaccinated, Dr. Meyerson urges everyone to continue to practice mitigation measures including masking at work and indoor public places. Further, residents should stay home if they have symptoms such as chills, fever, or mild respiratory/flu-like illness. Get tested and return to work, school or socializing once your test is negative and you're feeling better, or if you test positive wait 10 days after your symptoms started before ending isolation. If you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 (i.e., a close contact), take precautions even if you are vaccinated or otherwise do not need to quarantine.

COVID-19 vaccinations – including booster shots – are widely available at pharmacies, health care providers, and health department clinics. For a list of vaccine providers and locations in Benzie and Leelanau counties, [click here](#). To schedule a COVID-19 vaccination appointment with the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department exclusively for children 5 to 11 years old, call 231-256-0200. To schedule a COVID-19 vaccination appointment with the health department for anyone 12 and older, [click here](#). A parent/guardian must accompany anyone younger than 18 to a COVID-19 clinic. Please bring all insurance cards to the appointment. Anyone with questions or unable to find a time or date that works for them and/or their child may call the health department at 231-256-0200.

The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department will continue to offer regular weekly COVID-19 vaccination clinics starting January 4th. Due to staffing and site availability, we will not be holding clinics during the last two weeks of December. Starting January 4<sup>th</sup>, all community COVID-19 vaccination clinics will now begin at 12:00pm to provide additional appointments for residents.

**Tuesday, January 4th – Community COVID-19 Vaccination 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, January 5th – Community COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic**

- Platte River Association, 12990 Honor Hwy, Honor, MI 49640
- 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](#)

These clinics will be open to first, second, additional, and booster dose appointments and offering all three vaccines. Easy appointment scheduling that can be found at [www.bldhd.org](http://www.bldhd.org). Additional vaccination sites can be found at [vaccines.gov](http://vaccines.gov). Parents looking for pediatric COVID vaccine appointments are asked to call the Health Department at 231-882-4409 to schedule. Anyone who needs assistance scheduling an appointment should call the Michigan COVID-19 hotline at 888-535-6136.

**COVID-19 Testing**

The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department is partnering with Honu labs to offer free, walk-in COVID testing. Both rapid antigen tests and PCR tests are 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, Crystal Café, 1681 Benzie Hwy, Benzonia, MI
  - To register for testing in Benzonia, [click here](#)
  - **Starting January 4<sup>th</sup>, the testing clinic will move to Paul Oliver in Frankfort.**

**No testing clinic on Friday, December 24<sup>th</sup> (Benzie).**

**COVID-19 Case Counts**

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

- On Tuesday, December 14, 24 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (14) and Leelanau (10).
- On Wednesday, December 15, 33 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (18) and Leelanau (15).
- Today, December 16, 4 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (0) and Leelanau (4).

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

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 2,285, Leelanau– 2,405
- Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 327, Leelanau– 410
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,915, Leelanau– 1,962
- Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 43, Leelanau– 33
- Hospitalized: 276 total; 12 currently

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