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PERSONAL HEALTH DIVISION

For Immediate Release

December 20, 2021

1 year later: Health Department administered more than 25,000 COVID vaccines

It has been one year since the first COVID-19 vaccine was administered by Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department officials and since then, more than 55,000 doses have been provided to area residents in the two-county jurisdiction by all vaccination providers.

As of December 18, the health department has given 25,437 of those COVID-19 doses across its service area of Benzie and Leelanau counties.

With Christmas just days away and many of us traveling, Dr. Meyerson reminds us we are once again seeing high rates of community transmission for COVID-19 that inevitably leads to exposures in our households, social groups, and workplaces.

“Although fully vaccinated individuals are far less likely to be infected than unvaccinated, we are seeing many cases in vaccinated persons. Although these cases tend to be very mild the infected individual can spread the virus to close contacts, especially in their household and to those they spend a lot of time with,” said Dr. Josh Meyerson, Medical Director with the health department. “The Delta strain that now predominates has proven to be far more contagious than the previous strains encountered last winter and spring, and the latest variant of concern, Omicron, that will likely soon predominate in our area is even more contagious, even in the vaccinated.”

So how do we navigate through this as community members?

1. Vaccination is still the best tool we have to moderate the impact of this pandemic. Vaccines protect us from severe disease. Booster doses have shown to further reduce the risk of disease and reduce infection rates. Everyone is encouraged to get vaccinated, including your booster dose, as soon as you are eligible.
2. Continue to practice mitigation measures including masking at work/school and indoor public places.
3. Stay home if you have symptoms such as chills, fever, or mild respiratory/flu-like illness. Get tested and return to work/school/socialization once your test is negative and you're feeling better.
4. 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. These include self-monitoring for signs of illness, limiting your social gatherings, always wearing a mask while at work and other indoor settings, and getting tested 4-6 days after exposure. Household exposures are the highest risk for infection, followed by those in close contact for prolonged periods while unmasked at work, while eating, or in athletic or other indoor activities where there is close contact. Please be extra cautious to reduce close contact if you are a confirmed close contact as you are at high risk for getting COVID-19.

“All of us must decide what risk is acceptable when choosing activities to attend. With holiday gatherings upon us everyone must consider not only their own health but the health and safety of their friends and relatives, including those they may care for and those they may visit,” Dr. Meyerson said. “We all need to balance the desire to 'be careful' with the need for social interaction and time with loved ones,” he said, adding he wishes everyone a warm, healthy, and happy holiday.

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, December 21st – THERE WILL BE NO COMMUNITY COVID-19 VACCINATION CLINIC AS THE LOCATION IS NOT AVAILABLE.

- VFW Post 7731, 7475 E Duck Lake Rd, Lake Leelanau, MI 49653
- Time: No clinic this week
- To schedule an appointment for next year: [Click Here](#)

Wednesday, December 22nd – THERE WILL BE NO COMMUNITY COVID-19 VACCINATION CLINIC AS THE LOCATION IS NOT AVAILABLE.

- Starting January 5th, 2022, BLDHD's Community COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic in Benzie County will be held at Platte River Association, 12990 Honor Hwy, Honor, MI 49640.
- Time: No clinic this week
- To schedule an appointment for next year: [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:

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](#)
 - **No testing clinic in Benzie County on Friday, December 24th.**
 - **Starting January 4th, the testing clinic for Benzie County will move to Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital in Frankfort.**

COVID-19 Case Counts

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

- On Friday, December 17, 16 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (6) and Leelanau (10), and four new COVID-19 associated deaths in Benzie County (3) and Leelanau County (1).
- On Saturday, December 18, 17 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (6) and Leelanau (11).
- On Sunday, December 19, 8 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (1) and Leelanau (7), and one new COVID-19 associated death in Leelanau County.
- Today, December 20, 19 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (12) and Leelanau (7).

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

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 2,310, Leelanau– 2,440
- Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 266, Leelanau– 375
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,998, Leelanau– 2,030
- Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 46, Leelanau– 35
- Hospitalized: 283 total; 9 currently

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