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## PERSONAL HEALTH DIVISION

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**For Immediate Release**

**December 27, 2021**

### **Health officials: Get vaccinated, get booster to protect against latest variant**

A statewide goal to have 1 million more Michiganders, including 95% of eligible nursing home residents, receive the safe, effective COVID-19 booster by Jan. 31, 2022, was recently announced by the governor and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) officials. In addition, actions were outlined for residents to take to keep themselves and their families safe.

"As Omicron becomes the dominant COVID-19 variant across the U.S., we all should step up to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe," said Lisa Peacock, Health Officer with the Health Department. "I encourage everyone to get vaccinated and to make sure to get your booster shot, which offers a more robust protection against this newest variant," she added.

Health officials stress that none of us can predict whether we will get mild or severe symptoms or find ourselves facing long COVID symptoms. Even otherwise healthy and young people can get sick or end up needing care, so it is important that everyone use all of the proven prevention strategies at our disposal. If you are gathering with family, friends, or traveling, be extra vigilant, get vaccinated, get tested, and wear a mask to keep yourself, your family, and your community safe.

#### **Actions to take**

- Get your vaccine. Get your booster. 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 an insurance card 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.
- Mask up in public indoor settings and crowded outdoor settings. Upgrade your mask to something with additional layers such as a KN95 mask or wear two well-fitting face coverings.
- For gatherings with friends or family, people who are immunocompromised should take all precautions, including wearing a well-fitted mask. If a member of your household has a weakened immune system, wear a mask. If you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or if you may have been exposed to COVID-19, and before any unmasked gatherings, get tested. To find a test site in the area, visit [www.bldhd.org](http://www.bldhd.org).
- Because many of the symptoms of a cold or flu are similar to COVID-19, you are urged to stay home and avoid contacts if you are not feeling well.

#### **Current statistics**

According to recent data published by MDHHS, Michigan's positivity rate has decreased but remains relatively high at 16.2%, a reflection of our high transmission levels. Cases are at 477 cases per million and have been rising and falling over and over, but at an elevated level. This is a number we expect to rise as the Omicron variant continues to spread rapidly. Over the past month, 30- to 39-year-olds were experiencing the highest case rate and there were increases in hospital admissions among most age groups under 50. The percent of inpatient hospital beds occupied by individuals with COVID is now at 20.8%. This number has been increasing for 22 weeks and the mortality rate is high too - from Dec. 3-9, there were 756 COVID deaths.

#### **Risks for the unvaccinated**

Statewide data from the month of October showed unvaccinated people had 4.3 times the risk of testing positive for COVID-19 and 13.2 times the risk of dying from COVID-19 than people who were fully vaccinated. From Jan. 3-Dec. 15, 2021, people who were unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated represented 85.1% of COVID-19 cases, 88.1% of hospitalizations and 85.5% of deaths.

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 28th – 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 29th – 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:

- Tuesday, December 28th, 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 31st.**
  - **Starting January 4<sup>th</sup>, the testing clinic for Benzie County will move to Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital in Frankfort.**
- Thursday, December 30th, 10:00-3:00, VFW Post 7731, 7475 E Duck Lake Rd, Lake Leelanau, MI.
  - To register for testing in Leelanau, [click here](#)

### COVID-19 Case Counts

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

- On Tuesday, December 21, 16 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (10) and Leelanau (6).
- On Wednesday, December 22, 20 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (9) and Leelanau (11), and one new COVID-19 associated death in Benzie County.
- On Thursday, December 23, 15 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (6) and Leelanau (9).
- On Friday, December 24, 5 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (2) and Leelanau (3).
- On Saturday, December 25, 5 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (3) and Leelanau (2).
- On Sunday, December 26, 6 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (6).
- Today, December 27, 31 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (10) and Leelanau (21), and one new COVID-19 associated death in Benzie County.

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

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 2,356, Leelanau– 2,492
- Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 221, Leelanau– 290
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 2,087, Leelanau– 2,167
- Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 48, Leelanau– 35
- Hospitalized: 287 total; 7 currently

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