



Benzie County Office
6051 Frankfort Hwy, Ste 100
Benzonia, MI 49616

Phone: 231-882-4409
Fax: 231-882-0143

www.bldhd.org

Leelanau County Office
7401 E. Duck Lake Rd
Lake Leelanau, MI 49653

Phone: 231-256-0200
Fax: 231-882-0143

PERSONAL HEALTH DIVISION

For Immediate Release

January 12, 2022

Health Department adjusting contact tracing, case investigation processes

Due to significant case increases as the COVID-19 Omicron variant spreads in Michigan and locally, combined with waning public participation in contact tracing and case investigation, the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department pandemic response will begin shifting away from universal contact tracing and case investigations to focus on high priority community groups and those in congregate settings.

“With more than 10,000 new COVID-19 case referrals per day being reported across Michigan and averaging over 50 new cases per day in our two-county jurisdiction, and the Omicron variant surge expected to continue, individual level case investigation and contact tracing are no longer as effective tools with respect to controlling COVID-19 transmission on a population level,” said Lisa Peacock, Health Officer with the Health Department. “We will continue to monitor and provide outbreak investigation and infection prevention support for long term care facilities, shelters, schools and other congregate-like settings as well as public health awareness and education campaigns that tell people what their test results mean and how they can move forward in a way that limits spread of infection to their friends and families as well as monitor and provide outbreak investigation and infection prevention support for long-term care facilities, shelters, schools and other congregate-like settings,” Peacock added.

Health Department officials want to remind residents of four key points amid case increases and the Omicron variant being detected within the jurisdiction:

- 1) Stay home if sick and experiencing any [symptoms of COVID-19](#).
- 2) Get tested if symptomatic or once 5 days have passed after an exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19. Testing locations in Benzie and Leelanau County can be found [here](#). Stay home until results are received.
 - a) Did you use a home self-test and receive positive results? Report your positive status to get resources and support from the health department by visiting www.bldhd.org.
- 3) 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](#).
- 4) 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, 12 and older](#) to self-schedule an appointment. Parents looking for pediatric COVID vaccination appointments are asked to call the Health Department at 231-882-4409 to schedule.
 - a) Wondering if you are eligible to receive a booster? See the U.S. FDA graphic illustrating booster eligibility [here](#).

Individuals that test positive with results reported directly to the health department, or [self-report their positive status](#), may receive a text message directly from a health department nurse with educational resources and offering support during their isolation period. This shift away from direct case investigation and contact tracing via phone call comes after a significant increase in cases.

Individuals with positive test results may receive an additional text message or e-mail with a link to complete a case investigation in the form of an online survey Patient Education Genius (PEG). The survey only asks for information that is currently allowable under the Public Health Code and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) Privacy Act, such as demographics, symptoms, occupation, attendance at public events or gatherings, and people with whom they may have been in close contact.

For a list of vaccine providers and locations in Benzie and Leelanau counties, click [here](#). To schedule a COVID-19 vaccination appointment with the Health Department for children 5 to 11 years old, call 231-882-4409. To schedule a COVID-19 vaccination appointment with the health department for anyone 12 and older, [click here](#). A parent/guardian must accompany those younger than 18 to a COVID-19 clinic. Please bring an insurance card to the appointment.

Media Contact:

Rachel Pomeroy, PIO

231-882-6085

RPomeroy@bldhd.org

###