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PERSONAL HEALTH DIVISION

For Immediate Release

October 18, 2021

Clarification, status update regarding Moderna and J&J booster doses

The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department is awaiting final word from federal agencies before being able to offer the general public a Moderna or J&J booster shot - a move that may occur later this week.

Last week, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) held two meetings of its Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) to discuss new data for the currently available COVID-19 vaccines. For additional or booster doses of vaccinations to be approved for use, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) also needs to meet to discuss the data. Vaccinations need approval from the FDA and ACIP in order to be approved for administration. The ACIP meeting is scheduled for October 20 and 21. Currently, Moderna is on the schedule for October 20.

“We need the final guidance from these federal agencies in order for us to offer the Moderna or J&J booster shots,” said Dr. Josh Meyerson, Medical Director. “We know many people who received the Moderna or J&J vaccines are anxious to receive their booster shots. As soon as we receive approval, we will ask people to make an appointment for their booster vaccination,” Dr. Meyerson said, adding booster shots for those who received the Pfizer vaccine are currently available.

The health department recently created documents listing COVID-19 [vaccination clinics](#) and [testing site](#) in Benzie and Leelanau counties. Residents are urged to check the individual clinic sites listed for vaccine availability Moderna (age 18+), Pfizer (age 12+), and Johnson & Johnson (age 18+). Parent/guardian must accompany minors.

[Booster shots](#) are available if you received the Pfizer vaccine more than 6 months ago and are:

- Age 65+
- Resident or staff in long-term care settings
- Age 18+ and have [underlying medical conditions](#) including asthma, diabetes, obesity
- Age 18+ and work in [high-risk settings](#) including healthcare workers, teachers, grocery store workers

[Additional doses](#) are recommended for immunocompromised individuals who have received their second dose Pfizer or Moderna at least 28 days ago.

Vaccination is our most powerful tool. The health department offers convenient COVID-19 vaccination clinics for all area residents and visitors 12 and older by appointment ahead of time. Parent consent is required for minors. Public health nurses are on-site at these events and able to answer any questions about the vaccines. 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, October 19th

- Suttons Bay Middle School Gymnasium, 310 S. Elm Street, Suttons Bay, MI 49682
- Time: 1:00-5:00pm
- Vaccine: Moderna, J&J Janssen, and Pfizer (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor)
- To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

Wednesday, October 20th

- Crystal Cafe, 1681 Benzie Hwy, Benzonia, MI 49616
- Time: 1:00- 5:00pm
- Vaccine: Moderna, J&J Janssen, and Pfizer (open to 12 or older, 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 – 3 pm at the Suttons Bay Old Middle School. To register visit: <http://honumg.info/OldSuttonsBayMS>
- On Tuesday and Friday, from 10 am – 3 pm 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 Friday, October 15, 7 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (3), and Leelanau (4).
- On Saturday, October 16, 3 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (3), and Leelanau (0).
- On Sunday, October 17, 6 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (5), and Leelanau (1).
- Today, October 18, 18 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (7) and Leelanau (11).

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

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,583, Leelanau– 1,598
- Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 165, Leelanau– 118
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,384, Leelanau– 1,460
- Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 34, Leelanau– 20
- Hospitalized: 196 total; 2 currently

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