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PERSONAL HEALTH DIVISION

For Immediate Release

October 21, 2021

COVID-19 vaccinations for 5-11 year olds may occur in early November Health Department officials 'cautiously optimistic' about roll out date

Advisory Committees to the FDA and CDC are scheduled to meet in the next few weeks to consider approval of the Pfizer vaccine for 5–11-year-old children, and the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department and other providers are planning how they will roll out the vaccine once available.

“Once these national committees have reviewed the data, I am hopeful that the vaccine will be shown to be safe and effective,” said Dr. Josh Meyerson, Medical Director with the health department. “I am cautiously optimistic that we will be able to provide vaccine to 5-11 year olds in early November, and we are starting to plan accordingly,” Dr. Meyerson added.

The Food and Drug Administration’s Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet October 26 to discuss Pfizer’s submission for vaccines for 5-11-year-old children. Following that, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices is scheduled to meet November 2-3. Vaccinations for 5-11-year-olds would not begin until after CDC makes a recommendation for use.

Dr. Meyerson and other health officials are working now to prepare key partners to make the vaccine available for 5- to 11-year olds. Besides local health departments, those partners include pediatric provider offices, school-based health programs, pharmacies, and federally qualified health centers. As currently planned, the Pfizer vaccine for ages 5-11 will be a formulation of 10 mcg (compared to 30 mcg for ages 12 and older) and be packaged with an orange cap to differentiate it from the purple capped vial for those 12 and older.

However, at this time, no COVID-19 vaccine is yet approved and available to this age group, and parents/guardians will need to wait to schedule the vaccine for their children under the age of 12 until authorization is given by the FDA.

Until the vaccine is available for this younger population, the best practice for good health remains mitigation measures including wearing a mask in indoor settings that properly covers the mouth and nose, washing hands frequently, staying home if you are sick, and getting tested if you show any symptoms or are exposed to someone with COVID-19.

In addition, the health department is awaiting final word from federal agencies before being able to offer the general public a Moderna or J&J booster shot for those who are six months out from receiving their vaccinations. Booster doses for both Moderna and J&J vaccines could begin as early as next week.

The health department recently created documents listing COVID-19 [vaccination clinics](#) and [testing sites](#) 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. 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 26th

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

Wednesday, October 27th

- Crystal Cafe, 1681 Benzie Hwy, Benzonia, MI 49616
- Time: 1:00- 5:00pm
- Vaccine: Moderna, 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 - 3pm at the Suttons Bay Old Middle School. To register visit: <http://honumg.info/OldSuttonsBayMS>
- On Tuesday and Friday, from 10 am – 3pm 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 Tuesday, October 19, 11 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (5), and Leelanau (6).
- On Wednesday, October 20, 8 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (3), and Leelanau (5).
- Today, October 21, 9 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (7) and Leelanau (2).

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

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,598, Leelanau– 1,611
- Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 164, Leelanau– 115
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,400, Leelanau– 1,476
- Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 34, Leelanau– 20
- Hospitalized: 199 total; 4 currently

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