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PERSONAL HEALTH DIVISION

For Immediate Release

November 22, 2021

Health Department: Take responsibility to help stop COVID-19 spread

Due to a rise in COVID-19 cases, increased hospitalizations and deaths, and the upcoming holidays, everyone should know the federal, state, and local recommendations and take precautions to protect themselves, their families, and their loved ones.

“Hospitals, health care providers, emergency medical systems, and public health organizations are seeing the strain on their systems due to the surge,” said Lisa Peacock, Health Officer with the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department. “We cannot face this on our own. It is up to all of us to take action to help stem the rapid increase in cases across our region,” she said, adding cases, hospitalizations, and deaths are reaching or surpassing the peak numbers experienced in April 2020.

Those steps include:

- **Get vaccinated.** Whether you’re 5 or 95 or if it’s your first shot or a booster shot, vaccines are readily available. For a list of vaccine providers and locations in Benzie and Leelanau counties, click [here](#). In addition, the CDC recently recommended anyone 18 and older should receive a booster vaccine. Eligible individuals may choose which vaccine they receive as a booster dose. Some people may prefer the vaccine type they originally received, and others may prefer to get a different type of booster vaccine. CDC’s recommendations now allow for this type of mix and match dosing for booster shots. Individuals should consult their healthcare provider if there is a question which vaccine is appropriate for them. To schedule an appointment with the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department exclusively for children 5 to 11 years old, call 231-882-4409. To schedule an 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 231-882-4409.
- **Take steps to protect yourself, your family, your loved ones, and your community.** On Friday, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) issued a [Public Health Advisory](#) recommending everyone over the age of 2 should wear a face mask at indoor gatherings regardless of their vaccination status. In addition, establishments should implement a policy to ensure that all persons entering or seeking services, including employees, wear a mask. This face mask advisory remains in effect until further notice. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) also issued recommendations for safe gatherings including getting vaccinated, wearing masks, social distancing and washing hands. Mask wearing is considered an effective mitigation strategy and is recommended for all in public indoor settings in areas of high transmission and indoors for those who are not vaccinated. Practice social distancing, when possible, especially in places where the vaccination status of those around you is unknown.
- **Get tested if you are exposed or have symptoms.** Anyone with signs or symptoms of COVID-19 should get tested regardless of vaccination status or prior infection. If you get tested because you have symptoms or were potentially exposed to the virus, you should stay away from others while you wait for your test result. Find a test site can be found [here](#).
- **Complete your case investigation survey.** In recent weeks the health department case investigation staff have been working to reach all newly confirmed or probable individuals in order to provide support and determine close contacts. The health department is asking individuals to complete the online Patient Education Genius (PEG) survey as soon as possible after receiving the link via text or email. This survey

collects information from individuals who test positive for COVID-19 including demographics, symptoms, occupation, attendance at public events or gatherings, and people with whom they may have been in close contact. The survey does not gather any private information like social security numbers, personal passwords, or banking details. It also provides links to important information about isolation and quarantine as well as self-care. With the high number of cases being reported to the health department each day, staff are not able to contact every affected person in a timely manner. Therefore, it is important for everyone to understand the steps they should take if they test positive or are exposed. For those steps, [click here](#). If you have questions, please contact the health department at 231-882-4409.

- **Self-reporting your positive COVID-19 test result.** If you utilized a home COVID-19 test and received a positive result, please notify the health department by completing the [self-reporting survey](#). Doing so notifies the health department of your positive status and allows us to contact you directly or send you a link to the case investigation survey for resources and guidance during your isolation period. See resource – [if you test positive for COVID-19](#) for more information.

“As we approach this holiday week, we may wish to count our blessings including good health. And good health starts with taking responsibility to keep yourself and those around you safe,” Peacock said. “We wish all of you a happy thanksgiving and hope you enjoy it in good health and safely with family and friends.”

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, November 23rd – Community COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic

- VFW Post 7731, 7475 E Duck Lake Rd, Lake Leelanau, MI 49653
- Time: 12:00-5:00pm
- Vaccine: Moderna, Janssen, and Pfizer (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor)
- To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

Wednesday, November 24th – Community COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic

- Crystal Cafe, 1681 Benzie Hwy, Benzonia, MI 49616
- Time: 12:00- 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 Tuesday from 10 am – 3pm at the Crystal Café in Benzonia. To register visit: <https://honumg.info/CrystalCafe>
- **No Testing Thursday or Friday this week.** A list of additional local providers that are offering COVID-19 testing can be found on the [health department’s website](#).

COVID-19 Case Counts

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

- On Friday, November 19, 49 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (28), and Leelanau (21), and one new COVID-19 associated death in Benzie County.
- On Saturday, November 20, 36 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (16) and Leelanau (20), and one new COVID-19 associated death in Leelanau County.
- On Sunday, November 21, 14 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (7) and Leelanau (7).
- Today, November 22, 30 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (21) and Leelanau (9).

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

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,983, Leelanau– 2,019
- Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 357, Leelanau– 359
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,587, Leelanau– 1,635
- Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 39, Leelanau– 25
- Hospitalized: 241 total; 16 currently

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