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PERSONAL HEALTH DIVISION

For Immediate Release

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The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department COVID-19 Update

Today there were zero new cases of COVID-19 reported in Benzie County and five new cases of COVID-19 reported in Leelanau County. The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department has reported nine new cases – all in Leelanau County - of COVID-19 since Saturday, February 20th.

Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department's weekly shipment was delayed this week, but this is not expected to affect clinics. Fortunately, Tuesday's clinic was able to be switched from Moderna to Pfizer. This will change the timing for the 2nd dose clinic. We will be checking identification at clinics, please have your ID ready for our greeters.

As the total number of deaths due to COVID-19 exceeds 500,000 across the U.S., the impact of approximately 45 deaths in Benzie and Leelanau Counties are felt in households grieving the loss of loved ones.

"Every loss is devastating and is someone's mother or father or grandparent, neighbor or co-worker," stated Dr. Josh Meyerson, medical director for the health department. "We mourn with them for the loss of their loved one."

Dr. Meyerson notes that taking mitigation measures - wearing a mask covering your nose and mouth, staying six feet away from others, and washing your hands frequently - and getting vaccinated are the most effective ways to protect yourself and your loved ones from contacting or spreading the virus.

Vaccination efforts are stepping up in the health department's service area with more than 4,700 doses administered so far and more than 700 planned for this week at clinics in Benzie and Leelanau counties.

"Both Moderna and Pfizer are safe and effective," Dr. Meyerson stated. "Since December 14 over 40 million doses have been administered in the U.S. These vaccines have undergone the most intensive safety monitoring in history and results from the many different monitoring systems are very reassuring. Many people report mild side effects like pain and swelling at the injection site, headache, fever, fatigue, or muscle aches. These are common and in general last for less than 24 hours. Some individuals, more commonly with the second dose and in younger persons, may have more moderate symptoms and need to take a day off work but still, these side effects are short-lived and provide months of protection.

"Even more impressive is how well they work to reduce severe illness and mortality," he stated. "The vaccines were all 100% effective in the vaccine trials in stopping hospitalizations and death. I recommend that everyone that can, get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as vaccine is available to them. The combination of the protection from immunization and the mitigation measures we are taking are the best protection against getting or transmitting this disease. I also know that every person's situation is different, and some may have questions regarding safety and efficacy for them or their families," Dr. Meyerson stated, urging people to contact their care provider to discuss any concerns they may have.

As of today, here is where we are currently:

- Number of vaccine doses allocated for this week: 700 doses (500- 1st dose, 200- 2nd dose)
- Total number of vaccine doses received: 4,374 doses
- Total number of vaccine doses administered: 4,374 doses

As of 4:00pm, the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department is reporting:

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 879, Leelanau– 867
- Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 61, Leelanau– 53
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 788, Leelanau– 799
- Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 30, Leelanau– 15
- Hospitalized: 127 total; 1 current

The State of Michigan has reported 581,403 cases and 15,362 deaths.

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