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PERSONAL HEALTH DIVISION

For Immediate Release

February 26, 2021

The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department COVID-19 Update

Today there were two new cases of COVID-19 reported in Benzie County and four new cases of COVID-19 reported in Leelanau County. The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department has reported 25 new cases – 10 new cases in Benzie County and 15 new cases in Leelanau County - of COVID-19 since Tuesday, February 23rd.

Beginning next week, the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department will begin expanded use of their software tool, **Patient Education Genius (PEG)** to help better support COVID-19 case investigations and prioritization of disease outbreaks. The PEG system will send an individual a text message and/or e-mail with a link to an online survey. The survey is confidential and gathers general information as well as helps to identify those who may spread the virus to others, initiating timely isolation and quarantine measures. This automated process has been enhanced to improve efficiency and ease of use and we encourage anyone who receives these messages to respond promptly to ensure the necessary steps can be taken.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has informed local health departments of their minimum allocations for the next three weeks, in effort to help health departments plan their clinics and schedule appointments. The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department can plan on a minimum of 400 1st doses weekly for the next three weeks. There will be times when additional allocations will be available including next week when we will receive an additional 500 1st doses.

The health department has begun scheduling COVID-19 vaccination appointments for food processing and agriculture workers who fit into the newly prioritized categories starting March 1st, 2021. Using the guidance from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development released this week, we are focusing on employees that work directly on the food processing/packaging and in the farm areas where they are unable to maintain social distancing.

We have also begun contacting individuals on our COVID-19 vaccination pre-registration list who registered on or before the 12th of January. We have a team of staff working on calling those residents who did not provide emails or those who asked for assistance scheduling. We continue to be notified by residents that they are finding our scheduling emails in junk and spam, please check there if you have not received our email and registered before the 12th.

“One of the biggest challenges we have faced in this process has been the low and unpredictable allocations of vaccine, so we are excited to know our minimum allocation for the next three weeks,” stated Lisa Peacock, Health Officer. “Since the first dose arrived, Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department has administered over 5,000 doses. We are seeing progress each day with vaccination coverage, meaning at least 1 dose administered, of the 65+ population ranging from 35% to 38% across our jurisdiction. Our waiting lists are shrinking each week as we continue to administer all of the doses we receive.”

As of today, here is where we are currently:

- Number of vaccine doses allocated for next week: 900 doses (500 1st dose, 400- 2nd dose)
- Total number of vaccine doses administered this week: 695 doses
- Total number of vaccine doses received: 5,074 doses
- Total number of vaccine doses administered: 5,069 doses

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

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 889, Leelanau– 883
- Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 54, Leelanau– 60
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 805, Leelanau– 808
- Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 30, Leelanau– 15
- Hospitalized: 128 total; 2 current

The State of Michigan has reported 586,425 cases and 15,454 deaths.

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