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PERSONAL HEALTH DIVISION

For Immediate Release

March 17, 2021

The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department COVID-19 Update

Today there were three new cases of COVID-19 reported in Benzie County and six new cases of COVID-19 reported in Leelanau County.

The Medical Director of the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department is emphasizing the safety of the three available COVID-19 vaccines in an effort to curb skepticism and encourage residents to get vaccinated.

“We now have three different vaccines available to fight this pandemic,” said Dr. Josh Meyerson. “This is great news! All three of these vaccines are safe and effective and I can say with certainty that all three vaccines provide levels of protection that are comparable to some of the best vaccines we have for other serious infectious diseases for which we routinely vaccinate people,” he said.

The three vaccines that have been fully vetted and awarded Emergency Use Authorization by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and are available throughout the United States, Michigan, and the health department’s jurisdiction include Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson (Janssen).

- The Pfizer and Moderna are two-dose vaccines while the Janssen is one-dose.
- The Janssen and Moderna COVID-19 Vaccines are authorized for use in individuals 18 years of age and older. Pfizer is authorized for use in individuals 16 years of age and over.

Dr. Meyerson said he fully supports all three currently available vaccines for COVID-19. “All three vaccines are safe and have been shown to be highly effective at preventing symptomatic illness and hospitalization. In the clinical trials, all three vaccines were 100 percent effective in preventing deaths from COVID-19. There is also growing evidence that all three vaccines help prevent asymptomatic illness, too. This means that people who have been vaccinated are not likely to spread COVID-19 to others who are not vaccinated,” he emphasized.

There has been much debate about the advantages of one brand of vaccine over the other, but it is difficult to compare their efficacy, Dr. Meyerson said. The different brands of COVID-19 vaccines have not been studied in head-to-head comparisons. The vaccines have each been studied in slightly different groups of people and tested at different phases of the pandemic.

“With COVID-19 continuing to circulate as we work toward community immunity, my medical advice is this: the best vaccine is the one you can get the soonest,” Dr. Meyerson said.

Additional information about mRNA vaccines – Pfizer and Moderna – is available [here](#).

Additional information about the Adenovirus vaccine Johnson & Johnson is available [here](#).

As of March 14, the health department’s vaccination status is as follows:

- Number of vaccine doses allocated for next week: 1,228 doses (700- 1st dose, 528- 2nd doses)
- Number of vaccine doses distributed to other providers: 342 doses
- Number of vaccine doses administered so far this week: 366 doses
- Total number of vaccine doses received: 8,752 doses
- Total number of vaccine doses administered: 7,878 doses

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

Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 925, Leelanau– 938

Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 46, Leelanau– 84

Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 848, Leelanau– 839

Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 31, Leelanau– 15

Hospitalized: 134 total; 1 currently

The State of Michigan has reported 615,792 cases and 15,810 deaths.

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