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PERSONAL HEALTH DIVISION

For Immediate Release

March 22, 2021

The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department COVID-19 Update

Today there were two new cases of COVID-19 reported in Benzie County and two new cases of COVID-19 reported in Leelanau County. The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department has reported 15 new cases – three new cases in Benzie County and twelve new cases in Leelanau County - of COVID-19 since Saturday, March 20th.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) updated its Gatherings and Mask epidemic order on Friday, allowing up to 20% capacity in large outdoor stadiums and arenas that establish infection control plans. The update also increased testing requirements for youth ages 13-19 to ensure athletes can safely participate in sports. The order went into effect today and remains in effect through April 19.

As spring approaches and we start to make plans for the warmer weather, Dr. Josh Meyerson, Medical Director with the Health Department, reminds residents of the gathering mandates and the need to maintain preventative safety measures if we want to return to normalcy.

“Now isn’t the time to roll back our safety and public-health measures,” Dr. Meyerson said. “Getting everyone vaccinated is the most important step toward being able to eventually relax restrictions,” he said, adding he’s “cautiously optimistic” that if northern Michigan residents and visitors mask up, get vaccinated as soon as they can, maintain social distancing, and wash their hands, we will be able to have small family gatherings this spring and summer.

The MDHHS order announced Friday allows gatherings at [outdoor stadiums and arenas](#) to be 20% of the venue’s capacity if the site:

- Establishes an infection control plan that complies with the protocols included in MDHHS’s document entitled [Enhanced Outdoor Stadium and Arena Guidance](#).
- Posts the mitigation plan publicly.
- Sends infection control plans to the local health department and MDHHS at least seven days before scheduled events.
- Administers a testing program as specified in [MDHHS’s Guidance for Athletics for all players](#).

Beginning April 2, athletes ages 13-19 are required to be tested consistent with the testing protocol specified in MDHHS Interim Guidance for Athletics. A mask must be worn unless a sports organizer has deemed a type of sport to be unsafe to play while masked and a more frequent testing protocol is followed. All participants across the entire organization must be tested consistent with the testing protocol specified in MDHHS Interim Guidance for Athletics. For more information on sports and athletics: [Coronavirus - Sports and Athletics \(michigan.gov\)](#).

“We all have a personal responsibility to slow the spread of the virus so we can end this pandemic together,” said Dr. Meyerson, adding that by April 5, all residents 16 and older are eligible for the safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine.

The health department’s vaccination status is as follows:

- Number of vaccine doses allocated for this week: 1,342 doses (792 1st doses, 550 2nd doses)
- Total number of vaccine doses distributed to other providers: 402 doses
- Total number of vaccine doses administered: 8,739 doses
- Total number of vaccine doses received: 10,423 doses

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

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 935, Leelanau– 960
- Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 52, Leelanau– 88
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 852, Leelanau– 857
- Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 31, Leelanau– 15
- Hospitalized: 136 total; 1 currently

The State of Michigan has reported 629,612 cases and 15,903 deaths.

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