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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 four new cases of COVID-19 reported in Benzie County and five new cases of COVID-19 reported in Leelanau County.

In early April, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced a new resource that is available to ease the burden for those who have lost loved ones due to COVID-19. The agency will begin providing financial assistance for funeral expenses incurred after Jan. 20, 2020, for deaths related to coronavirus (COVID-19) to help ease some of the financial stress and burden caused by the pandemic. More information about eligibility and how to apply can be found on the [FEMA website](#).

In March, 201 COVID-19 cases were identified within the jurisdiction of the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department. Since the first reported case in March 2020, more than 1,950 total cases have been reported in Benzie and Leelanau counties.

“Positivity and cases continue to increase across the state and the Traverse City region,” said Lisa Peacock, Health Officer. “Simultaneously, our local hospitals are reporting a sharp increase in inpatient cases of COVID-19. We have had several cases of the B.1.1.7 variant identified across northern Michigan and therefore we suspect that it will continue to become more predominant as predicted,” she said.

Even though B.1.1.7 variant has not been identified in Benzie and Leelanau counties like our surrounding counties, we know it is just a matter of time before it is identified. Outbreaks continue to be related to close contact among individuals who have not yet been vaccinated. Activities such as sports and social gatherings, which provide opportunity for the virus to spread in close contact as well as any congregate living scenarios, are particularly vulnerable to the increased transmissibility of circulating variants, Peacock noted.

Operated by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), V-safe, is an after COVID-19 vaccination health check-in, is helping providers across the country learn more about and possible side effects from the vaccine. Health Department staff and volunteers are distributing a flyer about V-safe to stations at our vaccination clinics.

V-safe is a smartphone-based tool that uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. Through the opt-in program, users can quickly tell the CDC if they have any side effects after getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

The Department of Justice has received reports that fraudsters are creating fraudulent COVID-19 vaccine surveys for consumers to fill out with the promise of a prize or cash at the conclusion of the survey. We ask residents who choose to participate to sign up at our clinic or if they choose to sign up after their appointment to look out for fraud-like language such as prizes or cash.

“I encourage everyone who receives a COVID-19 vaccine to participate in the V-safe program,” said Dr. Josh Meyerson, Medical Director. “The more people who participate in V-safe, the better the data.” Residents can register up to 21 days after getting the vaccine, but it is best to start on the day you get your first dose. Informational sheets are available at our clinics for residents to wish to participate.

As of today, here is where we are currently:

- Number of vaccine doses administered this week: 1,256 doses
- Total number of vaccine doses distributed to other providers: 692 doses
- Total number of vaccine doses administered: 11,315 doses
- Total number of vaccine doses received: 12,007 doses

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

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 981, Leelanau– 1,002
- Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 78, Leelanau– 100
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 872, Leelanau– 886
- Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 31, Leelanau– 16
- Hospitalized: 136 total; 0 currently

The State of Michigan has reported 678,295 cases and 16,141 deaths.

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