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PERSONAL HEALTH DIVISION

For Immediate Release

May 14, 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 Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is updating the Gatherings and Mask Order to align with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's latest guidance on face coverings. The new order goes into effect at 9 a.m., Saturday, May 15.

The CDC announced Thursday that people who are fully vaccinated against the coronavirus can stop wearing masks, both outdoors and indoors, except on public transportation and in crowded indoor venues.

The new guidelines come as cases are dropping and as the health department and others across the state and U.S. are vaccinating children ages 12 and up. The new guidelines are intended, at least in part, to encourage people to get the vaccine. The CDC guidelines do not override federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial laws or regulations put in place by businesses and workplaces.

"Many people welcome these guidelines which represent another step toward normalcy. We can enjoy these new freedoms thanks in large part to the rising level of vaccination coverage across our state! We need to continue this amazing progress to continue toward emerging from the pandemic!" said Lisa Peacock, Health Officer.

According to the CDC, this guidance is based on the available science, and over the past few weeks, cases have continued falling dramatically, and a growing number of studies have shown three big things: 1. The vaccines are working in the real world. Studies show them to be more than 90% effective in the real-world settings in preventing mild and severe disease, hospitalization, and death; 2. The vaccines have proven to be effective against the COVID-19 variants currently circulating in the country; and 3. If you're vaccinated, you're less likely to spread the virus. A growing body of evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people are less likely to have asymptomatic infection and to be able to transmit COVID-19 to others.

"Taken together, this science is encouraging and shows that vaccinated people are protected and less likely to carry the virus to others. So, with all this evidence in mind, we are recommending that vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask," the CDC stated.

If you travel, you will still be required to wear a mask on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States, and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations. The CDC will continue to update guidance and policies as the science emerges and more people are vaccinated.

The CDC and health department recognizes that the challenge is you may not know if someone around you is vaccinated or not. "This is why we are encouraging everyone to get vaccinated – because we know the benefits: it protects you, it protects others, and it lets us begin to return to normal. So, we hope everyone takes advantage of this important tool to stay safe and end the pandemic. Vaccination is safe, available, and free," Peacock said.

Another key to this new CDC guidance is one needs to be fully vaccinated. Fully vaccinated means 2 weeks after your second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine. If you don't meet these requirements, regardless of your age, you are NOT fully vaccinated. Keep taking all precautions until you are fully vaccinated.

The health department is offering walk-in vaccinations or people can make an appointment at www.bldhd.org. Additional vaccination sites can be found at vaccines.gov. Residents can choose the date and location for their appointment.

Upcoming clinics for walk-ins or to make a reservation by clicking on the link provided include:

- **Saturday, May 15th**
 - Benzie Central Gymnasium, 9222 Homestead Rd, Benzonia, MI 49616
 - Time: 10:00- 1:00pm
 - Vaccine: Moderna, Janssen, and Pfizer (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor)
 - To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)
 - St. Ambrose Cellars, 841 S Pioneer Rd, Beulah, MI 49617
 - Pop-up clinic, walk-ins welcome
 - Time 1:00-4:00pm
 - Vaccine: Moderna and Janssen (open to 16 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor)
- **Tuesday, May 18th**
 - Suttons Bay Old Middle Gymnasium, 310 S. Elm Street, Suttons Bay, MI 49682
 - Time: 10:00- 6:00pm
 - Vaccine: Moderna, Janssen, and Pfizer (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor)
 - To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)
 - Benzie Area Christian Neighbors, 2804 Benzie Hwy, Benzonia, MI 49616
 - Pop-up clinic, walk-ins welcome
 - Time 1:00-4:00pm
 - Vaccine: Moderna and Janssen (open to 16 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor)

As of 4:00 p.m. today, the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department is reporting:

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,236, Leelanau– 1,243
- Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 119, Leelanau– 86
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,085, Leelanau– 1,141
- Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 32, Leelanau– 16
- Hospitalized: 157 total; 4 currently

The State of Michigan is reporting 873,335 cases and 18,500 deaths.

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*Please note that this Update contains the most current information as of its release.

Please visit <https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus> for further updates later today or over the weekend.