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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 two new cases of COVID-19 reported in Benzie County and zero new cases of COVID-19 reported in Leelanau County. The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department has reported six new cases – three new cases in Benzie County and three new cases in Leelanau County - of COVID-19 since Friday, May 15th. Saturday, May 15th, three new cases were reported in Leelanau County. Sunday, May 16th, one new case was reported in Benzie County.

If you were vaccinated in another state and want to make sure “your vax counts here,” the health department is requesting you complete an [online form](#). The four-question form asks your name, date of birth, address, contact information, and requires you to submit a photo of your COVID-19 vaccination card. One survey per recipient of an out-of-state vaccination should be completed. If you are unable to complete the online survey, visit a health department office location or email hotline@bldhd.org for assistance.

“It is important to count every one of our residents who have been vaccinated out-of-state in our numbers so we can accurately report our vaccination rate and know when we reach - and exceed - our 70% goal of all eligible residents being vaccinated,” said Lisa Peacock, Health Officer.

In addition, health officials today reviewed with school officials the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s recently released guidance for [fully vaccinated people](#). The latest CDC guidance allows for fully vaccinated individuals to resume pre-pandemic activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance. Although the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) also updated their [Epidemic Order](#) pertaining to gatherings and face masks on Friday to align with the new CDC guidance, these changes have raised questions for schools about how to proceed in the current school year. This confusion is understandable for many businesses, including schools, during a time of transition when other state and local rules continue to apply, including the MIOSHA Emergency Rule.

The CDC recommends – and the health department concurs – that schools continue to use the COVID-19 prevention strategies outlined in the current version of [CDC’s Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools](#) for at least the remainder of the 2020-2021 academic school year.

The CDC recommendation for continuation with these prevention strategies is based in part on the following factors:

- Students will not be fully vaccinated by the end of the 2020-2021 school year. Youth between the ages of 12 and 15 became eligible to receive the Pfizer vaccine on May 12, 2021. Because people are not fully vaccinated until 2 weeks after their second dose of the Pfizer vaccine, students in this age group will not be fully vaccinated before the end of the current school year. Additionally, youth under the age of 12 are not yet eligible for vaccination.
- Time is needed for schools to make systems and policy adjustments. Systems and policy adjustments may be required for schools to change mask requirements for students and staff while continuing to ensure the safety of unvaccinated populations.

CDC plans to update its guidance for schools in the coming weeks. Updated guidance can inform school planning for the 2021-2022 academic year.

“We understand this is a challenging time for schools yet the mitigation efforts that schools have put into place have been working,” Peacock said. “We are recommending that schools continue these practices, including all staff and students wearing a mask in the classroom and indoors. We encourage our school leadership to put forth a good faith effort to follow newly updated MDHHS guidance for sports and large outdoor events, and to continue your best efforts to maintain a safe environment for students, families, and staff – especially within the school building” she added.

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:

- **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 10:00-12:00pm
 - Vaccine: Moderna, Janssen, and Pfizer (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor)
- **Wednesday, May 19th**
 - Benzie Friend Center and Resale, 1034 Michigan Ave, Benzonia, 49616
 - Pop-up clinic, walk-ins welcome
 - Time 12:00-2:00pm
 - Vaccine: Moderna and Janssen (open to 18 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor)
- **Thursday, May 20th**
 - Crystal Cafe, 1681 Benzie Hwy, Benzonia, MI 49616
 - 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](#)

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

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,239, Leelanau– 1,246
- Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 112, Leelanau– 82
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,095, Leelanau– 1,148
- Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 32, Leelanau– 16
- Hospitalized: 157 total; 3 currently

The State of Michigan is reporting 876,854 cases and 18,627 deaths.

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