

COVID-19 Conversations with Community Partners

April 15, 2020

Questions and Answers

1. **How long does it take to get test results back?**

This varies based on what lab is doing the testing. It can be as short as 24 hours to 10 days, but the average seems to be about 72 hours. The turnaround time is improving as we have more labs available to do the testing. A newly opened testing facility at the Northwest Michigan Health Services, Inc. site in Leelanau County anticipates a turn-around time of 24 to 48 hours. Some of the hospitals in the region have been doing some rapid tests where they can get results back within 15 minute and are being used for hospital patients to help with care decisions.

2. **How much does a test cost for uninsured people?**

While we are not sure what local providers may be charging, we do know there are providers who are committed to getting people tested regardless of insurance status.

3. **Appreciation to Benzie Bus in coordinating face mask donations and delivering out to the public. To date over 400 homemade masks have been donated. It is important to note that it was recommended to wear a mask while out in the community. Wearing a cloth mask or face covering helps us protect those around us by containing our own respiratory droplets and thus protecting the community. Benzie Bus is also providing a great community service of delivering groceries to people in the community that have requested it.**

4. **Michelle Klein wanted to alert the community that starting April 16th, the State and health departments will start reporting probable cases in addition to confirmed cases. A probable case is someone who has symptoms and has a link to someone exposed to COVID-19. This additional reporting could result in increased positive numbers being reported to the public.**

5. **Scott Tucker from the National Park Service commented on the closure of the National Park Service areas.**

The Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore has closed all public places to help control the crowds. There were four factors used in making the decision to close:

- a. Visual evidence of the community not social distancing and being aware of their surroundings. Of the five trail heads within the Park Service, there were over 500 cars in the parking lots. As a result, the NPS closed the main access points to the public.
- b. People were not wearing masks nor following the social distancing guidelines.
- c. Public restrooms were shut down for safety of custodial staff and vandalism. However, restrooms continue to be broken and vandalized.
- d. Law enforcement rangers within the park having conversations with people who were visiting from out of the area. It is apparent that people not abiding by the guidelines of self-isolating.

The Park has 50 miles of county roads and 60 miles of beaches that are still available to residents. The NPS encourages local people to use roads and walk around the lakeshore. Heritage Trail is officially closed to the public. The NPS has been working with local, State and Federal authorities on guidance when it comes to closing the Park.

6. **How can we decrease COVID-19 contamination on our farm/business?**

Farms as well as businesses can look at the Essential Services Business toolkit that is available on the BLDHD.org website.

7. **What happens if a customer contracts COVID-19 while visiting our farm/business?**

When a person tests positive for COVID-19, the Health Department immediately starts a case investigation of

where that person has been and who they may have interacted with. Currently, most interactions have been within in the person's household. When the restrictions are lifted, the Health Department will continue this practice. Right now, businesses are to follow safety measures as outlined in the local Health Department Emergency Order 2020-2 and Governor Whitmer's Executive Order 2020-42. If a business is doing their best to follow best practices, they are likely to offer the most protection for their customers. The public health emergency order can be found on the BLDHD.org website or by clicking the link below.

http://www.bldhd.org/local/upload/file/4_10_2020%20Public%20Health%20Emergency%20Order%20BLDHD.pdf

8. So, what can we do if a customer is displaying symptoms?

This really depends on the type of business you are in. A provider office might be expecting to see sick patients, but a grocery store would not. If a customer is visibly displaying symptoms in a setting that is not prepared for that, it is not unreasonable to ask that person to leave the premises but also offer to assist them to get what they need by directing to community resources. If a person is going to the grocery store while they are sick, they may not be aware of other resources. Businesses can contact the Health Department for a list of resources available for the public.

9. How can businesses communicate their plans of dealing with COVID-19 to their customers?

Businesses can communicate this through their normal channels as they would with any other announcement. This can be done through media, social media resources, emails, advertisements, postings, etc.

10. How do enforce social distancing when it is a place a person can come and wander around? How can you operate enough customer density to make a living?

It is a difficult time for everyone. It is important to understand that by protecting the health of the public, we are ultimately protecting the economy the best way that we can. We commend everyone's patience and share in the concern and frustration. The Essential Business Toolkit offers some great resources for businesses like marking places in line to distance, limiting the number of people in at one time. If a business would like to specifically talk about their circumstances, they can call the Health Department's COVID-19 line at 231-882-2197.

11. There has been talk about a fall rebound of COVID-19? Should businesses be planning to close ahead of the rebound?

Unfortunately we cannot predict what will happen in the future. We only know what we know right now. We do know that by flattening the curve, we are stretching the length of time we will be dealing with this disease within our community. Michigan has not seen a decrease in the number of cases yet. When the time comes, slowly lifting restrictions will help reduce the risk associated with an increase in positive cases.

12. How do we minimize the risk of people coming from metropolitan areas where the virus is dense?

In the latest Executive Order that runs through April 30th, the Governor added more restrictions; people cannot travel between their two homes, restricted short-term rentals. The National Park Service closing down Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore was another way to deter people from traveling. It is important to follow the stay at home orders to minimize the risk.

13. What can you say about possible transmission through water or sewage?

Because this is a novel virus, there is a lot we are still learning about it. We are not familiar with the level of risk associated with transmission through water or sewage. There is a lot of ongoing research happening about transmission. We do know that is transmissible through respiratory droplets and this is why wearing a mask in public is a good prevention tool.

14. Do you think summer camps will have to cancel this summer?

We do not know that answer at this time. We do know that congregate living is one of our highest risk populations, long-term care facilities, jails, college dorms. There may be some limitations but do not know for certain.

In closing, there are many good things happening behind the scenes. Many of our public health successes are silent. We are encouraged by increased testing capacity, increased contact tracing abilities and hospitals ability to handle the care of patients who present to them. We encourage everyone to follow the Stay Home Stay Safe order and together we can get through this.