

COVID-19 Conversations with Community Partners

April 27, 2020

Questions and Answers

- 1. Needing clarity for allowable business activity with the expansion of the outdoor activity and lifting the restrictions of motorized boating. If a business implements the protocols as outline in the Business Tool Kit, can they be allowed to operate onsite?**

The lifted restrictions are detailed in Executive Order 2020-59 and we encourage any business with questions about whether their operation is allowable to refer to the EO and associated FAQ's. As with any business reopening, there are requirements for protective measures such as screening employees, implementing social distancing of six feet and now face coverings/masking. Again, it is advisable to go to the State of Michigan's website to review the most recent Executive Orders and associated FAQ's for commonly asked questions.

www.michigan.gov/coronavirus

- 2. In regard to universal masking, there are a lot of people who continue not to wear masks when they go out in public; even in closed places.**

The purpose of masking while out in public is that we protect those around us by containing our own respiratory droplets. The masking requirement when in any enclosed public space is part of the Governor's Executive Order 2020-59 that went into effect at 11:59 pm on April 26th. Due to the short notice, people may not have had time to obtain masks or having a hard time finding masks. The State's Attorney General has asked law enforcement to have patience for people who have not obtained a mask yet in these early stages and our hope is that compliance will be achieved shortly. The Health Department is reaching out to community partners that are making masks so we can have some available at our offices to hand out to clients that come in without a mask. Please contact us if you or know of someone making masks that we can give out.

- 3. How are you finding the cases that you are following? Is it from cases of people that report to the hospital?**

Every provider and every lab in the State is required to report positive test results of communicable diseases to the local health department/Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. For providers, positive results are reported to the local health department who then enters the test results in the State's data base. Labs are required to report positive results directly to the provider who ordered the test and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

- 4. With the new priority of testing issued last week, especially with healthcare workers, that have symptoms as priority 1. How do we, as an employer, decide or pursue testing?**

Although eligibility for testing was expanded last week and new priority groups added, there continue to be supply constraints locally as well as a lot of unknowns about the value of asymptomatic testing. Local providers and testing facilities are exploring their resources and determining what groups they are able to prioritize for testing. Local testing facilities are still testing priority groups 1 and 2 (healthcare and EMS workers with symptoms, elderly, those with risk for severe disease, and hospitalized patients) and some are providing expanded testing as resources allow. The Health Department is doing a lot of outreach to providers, so they understand the new testing priorities and assure they have the supplies they need if testing. While we don't have the local capacity for widespread testing of asymptomatic workers yet, we know that there may be circumstances where this should be considered. Feel free to call the health department and we can sort out these scenarios based on the circumstances and risk exposure.

- 5. How much more testing do we need to open this region further?**

We are not sure as there is no magic number. The number of days we have testing done with no positive test results is a good sign. We will not be making that decision locally. The State will be looking at the data. We currently need to be testing anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 and then will be looking for a sustained

decrease in the number of cases as well as a decrease in the number with positive results.

6. What sort of businesses will be allowed to return to operation?

This plan will be released by the State. We can assume businesses that have a low number of people in an indoor setting would be at a lower risk. The Governor has stated the potential for construction businesses to reopen soon. Employers have the availability to reduce their risk score if they can implement protective workplace strategies as outlined in the Business Toolkit.

7. Of the 13 cases in Benzie and Leelanau, how many of them have recovered from the virus?

Recovery is a hard definition. The State's definition of recovery is 30 days from a diagnosis. However, some patients have no symptoms in less than 30 days, and some have symptoms that prolonged and are even hospitalized or ventilated after 30 days. This is different for each person. Based on the State's definition, we have only had one local case past 30 days who would be considered to be recovered.

8. It was noted that yesterday the Benzie County Board of Commissioners passed resolution 2020-013 to protective measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 throughout Michigan. Among other things, this restricts public access to the Benzie County Government Center, except with an appointment and COVID-19 screening, until May 15th.

9. If a person has self-quarantined in Detroit for a month, does that time count for when they come to their summer home?

The Health Department feels that it does not. If someone is coming in the area outside the Health Department jurisdiction, then you are advised to quarantine for two weeks. The Health Department is putting together a flyer and a toolkit for residents returning to their home in Northern Michigan so that they can maintain quarantine comfortably at home. Once that is finalized, we will be asking our community partners to help distribute to those residents coming up.

10. The National Park Service was asked what they were doing about their staff people coming in to work seasonally.

The National Park Service has about 60 seasonal employees moving in the area after Memorial Day. When they arrive, they will go into quarantine for two weeks regardless of where they are housed. This is why the National Park Service is not opening back up to the public until July. The National Park Service is committed to taking care of their employees and keeping the public safe.

11. What about vaccines that are in series and one is now due?

The Health Department has been providing critical vaccines to infants and pregnant women. We are just starting the conversation about expanding immunization services. We would be looking toward children needing additional vaccines to complete their protection as one of the next priority groups.

In closing, we would like to thank everyone for their time and efforts in keeping the community safe. The Health Department provides daily updates. If you would want to be added to our emailing list, please contact Michelle Klein at mklein@bldhd.org