
Release date: August 5th, 2025

BLDHD Reminds Families to Schedule Back-to-School Health Services

As families gear up for a new school year, the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department (BLDHD) and Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance (NMPHA) is reminding parents and caregivers to prioritize important health screenings and services that help children succeed in the classroom.

From preschool through high school, a child's ability to see, hear, stay healthy, and stay in school is closely tied to preventive care and early detection. Local health departments across Northern Michigan are working together to ensure that all students start the year healthy, safe, and ready to learn.

Vision and Hearing Screenings

Vision and hearing screenings are required by Michigan law before entering kindergarten and are offered at no cost through your local health department. These quick, fun tests help detect problems early—so children don't fall behind due to issues that may go unnoticed.

"Good vision and hearing are essential for classroom learning," said Daniel Thorell, BLDHD's Health Officer. "We want to make sure every child has the best opportunity to succeed from day one."

Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment (KOHA) & Sealant Program

New for the 2024–2025 school year, Michigan law requires all children entering kindergarten to have a dental screening. The Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment (KOHA) helps identify cavities and other dental issues that may impact overall health and school performance.

In addition, the school-based dental sealant program offers free preventive dental sealants to eligible students in participating schools. Dental sealants are a simple, effective way to prevent cavities and keep kids smiling all year.

Back-to-School Immunizations

Immunizations protect children from serious illnesses such as measles, whooping cough, and meningitis. Michigan requires specific immunizations before a child can attend school, and your local health department offers appointments to make it easy to get up to date.

"Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to keep students and our communities safe," said Dr. Joshua Meyerson, BLDHD's Medical Director. "We encourage families to schedule immunizations early to avoid the back-to-school rush."

How to Schedule Services

Local health departments across Northern Michigan offer hearing and vision screenings, dental screenings, and immunizations for children. Services may be available at schools or health department offices.

To learn more or schedule an appointment in Benzie or Leelanau County, visit www.bldhd.org or call 231-882-4409 ext. 3.

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