



PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT – July 2, 2020

STAY SAFE TO STAY OPEN THIS SUMMER

We are urging the public to take important safety precautions over the 4th of July weekend, and continuing throughout the busy summer months. Over the past week, we have noted concerning trends surrounding the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, at the local, state, and national level. Since June 1st in our four-county jurisdiction we have reported 20 new cases with 60% reported as asymptomatic. We have also noted that a large percentage of our recent cases are related to travel. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services reported this week that there are cases increasing in every region in Michigan and both the Lansing and Grand Rapids regions have moved into a higher risk category due to rapid and significant increases in cases. Nationally, several states report having to take steps backward in their reopening process including Florida, Texas, and Arizona. This global pandemic remains a significant risk to health and even economic well-being should additional restrictive measures have to be taken.

In northern Michigan, our hospitals are already experiencing their typical seasonal rise in census which means they function much closer to capacity than at other times of the year so the risk of a surge in cases is of particular concern to our communities. The characteristics of recent cases include multiple contacts due to interactions at gatherings such as weddings, funerals, and parties with many cases related to travel either into or out of the area. While we occasionally release information about public exposure sites when we can't effectively identify all close contacts, everyone needs to remember that the majority of COVID-19 cases appear to be asymptomatic. Asymptomatic cases are especially difficult because they are not sick and therefore not staying home. These individuals are in the communities in which we live, work, and play with no idea they are spreading a dangerous virus. During the month of June, we have investigated each of these new cases within 24 hours and traced over 80 of their close contacts. In addition, we have assisted with case investigation on several cases that do not reside in our jurisdiction. The high number of contacts associated with recent cases reflects a shift to more frequent close interactions between people.

We need only to look to other communities within the state to understand how dangerous it can be when people congregate together, especially without masking or social distancing. An outbreak associated with a local restaurant/bar in East Lansing now involves over 130 people and 13 different counties. This outbreak has required steps backward in the re-engagement process including business closures, local health orders reducing indoor capacity, [new Executive Orders](#) forcing closure of indoor spaces for some establishments, and recategorization to a higher risk level in some regions. We can still prevent these steps backward in our region - mask up, wash up, and spread out!

We have received multiple complaints that there are many in the community who are not following required safety measures, especially masking. We urge the public to maintain a heightened level of awareness of the rapidly rising number of cases and associated risks. There is no one safety measure that will fully protect us from COVID-19. Especially during the popular summer holidays, we all must do our part to STAY SAFE TO STAY OPEN.

Residents and Businesses are URGED to comply with the orders and recommendations in place:

- Executive Order 2020-115 **REQUIRES** that anyone in an indoor public place wear a facial covering unless they are unable to medically tolerate it.
- Executive Order 2020-114 **REQUIRES** that employees who cannot maintain 6 feet of distance wear a facial covering and that the employer provide them if needed.



- Monitor the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, which include fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and new loss of taste or smell.
- **STAY HOME WHEN YOU ARE SICK** – also, individuals at risk of severe illness, including seniors and people with heart, lung, and immune disorders, should consider staying home to avoid others who are sick.
- Avoid congregating with large numbers of people on beaches, boats, trails, and other popular destinations.
- Assess risk of travel for yourself and your visitors. Consider cancelling travel which involves unnecessary risk to yourself or the community you plan to visit.
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, keyboards, cell phones and light switches.
- Communicate and reinforce best practices for washing hands and covering coughs and sneezes.
- Be sure to maintain a supply of medications, food, and other essentials in your house and utilize delivery and curbside services if you are vulnerable or quarantining.

This situation changes daily If you want the latest information, you can visit the Health Department Website (nwhealth.org/covid19) where we provide resources for businesses, and links to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov)) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS: [Michigan.gov/coronavirus](https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus)).

We have established a Public Health Information Line so that we can efficiently respond to inquiries at 1-800-386-5959.