



**MEDIA CONTACT:**  
Erin Luckhardt, PIO  
O: 231-347-5628  
[e.luckhardt@nwhealth.org](mailto:e.luckhardt@nwhealth.org)  
[www.nwhealth.org](http://www.nwhealth.org)

**March 26, 2020**

### **Health Department of Northwest Michigan COVID-19 Daily Update**

The COVID-19 situation continues to change rapidly in Michigan and across the country. Testing guidelines have shifted over the past few days and we have seen an increase of individual cases. The time to act to ensure the safety of our communities is **now**. The steps that we currently take may not be immediately reflected in our communities, but rather will be seen in the next several weeks.

As test guidelines change, we have been continuing to work with hospitals and community partners to maximize testing capacity within the State-issued priorities. At the same time, we are encouraging residents to shift public focus from ‘cases in counties’ to assuming that there is a risk of exposure to COVID-19 regardless of where you are. Therefore, we are asking all residents to follow the Governor’s orders to “shelter in place” whenever possible.

Lisa Peacock, Health Officer at the Health Department of Northwest Michigan, shared that “the data that supports this *Stay at Home* order is extremely compelling. If we continued mere social distancing, our healthcare system would be completely overwhelmed within a couple of weeks. We have the opportunity to drastically slow the spread and reduce that burden to a manageable level through a strong and compliant shelter in place strategy.”

Residents returning to northern Michigan, particularly those coming from areas experiencing high levels of COVID-19 exposure (ex: New York City, Florida, Detroit metro area), are asked to help save lives by practicing the ‘shelter in place’ as issued by the Governor. For those over the age of 65 or at increased risk of severe illness, we recommend they limit trips to public areas such as grocery stores as much as feasible. If any resident of our community needs assistance, they should contact 2-1-1 to be connected to available services in the community. It will take all of us doing our part to keep our community, state and nation as safe as possible from the impacts of COVID-19.

As of 4:00pm, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan is reporting positive COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim – 0; Charlevoix – 4; Emmet – 3; Otsego – 7. The State of Michigan has reported 2,856 cases and 60 deaths.

Everyone is encouraged to keep following these basic prevention steps to prevent the spread of the virus:

- wash your hands often with soap and water;
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands;
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing;
- avoid shaking hands;
- keep at least six feet apart from others when in public;
- avoid contact with people who are sick; and
- stay home when you are sick.

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan continues to work to slow the spread of illness and provide reliable and accurate information to the public. Stay up-to-date with COVID-19 in Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego Counties by visiting the Health Department [website](#) or [Facebook](#) page.

*The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For more information, visit [nwhealth.org](http://nwhealth.org).*

###