

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Local Health Departments Respond to Michigan Supreme Court Ruling on Governor's Emergency Powers

In response to the Michigan Supreme Court ruling on October 2, 2020, that Governor Gretchen Whitmer exceeded her powers during the coronavirus pandemic, Lisa Peacock, Health Officer for Benzie Leelanau District Health Department and the Health Department of Northwest Michigan, issued the following statement:

At this point, our understanding is that the Governor's Executive Orders are in effect for 21 days from the Supreme Court Ruling although we know that she has requested clarification of this timeframe. The Governor has also stated that many of her orders may be re-issued under other authorities. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) also has several Epidemic Orders in place which are not affected by the ruling. There are also multiple guidance plans and documents in place that serve to continue to guide us including the Return to School Roadmap and the MISafeStart Plan, as well as the comprehensive reopening plans developed by multiple sectors of business. MDHHS has advised that they are working on their next steps which will take a little time. We believe the best scenario is to assess what future rules or orders may be issued statewide before we determine if any local orders will be necessary.

From a public health perspective, the safety precautions that are in place and all of the work we have done together have kept Northern Lower Michigan in Phase 5 and so far we have been able to manage transmission. The reasons to continue masking, limiting gathering sizes, social distancing and screening of employees stretch far beyond Executive Orders. We want to remind everyone not to give up and to continue to work together to keep each other safe. We encourage all sectors of business to continue to follow the reopening plans you have developed.

We stand behind the important mitigation measures and safety precautions that are currently in place. They are working to reduce transmission of COVID-19. We have worked hard to get this far together and we encourage everyone to stay the course and continue to protect themselves and each other. We will continue to focus our public health efforts on testing, investigation, and contact tracing as well as promoting compliance with safety precautions and will share additional information as it becomes available.