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

### **Continued Safety Precautions Amid Increasing Cases, and Additional Information for Seniors**

While this is an exciting time for those able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan is still reporting new cases daily and urges residents to demonstrate safety precautions to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their communities from the coronavirus.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) still requires individuals who test positive and their close contacts to isolate and quarantine, respectively. Quarantine and isolation practices are scientifically proven to reduce the spread of the virus, and a 14-day quarantine period is still best practice. While the standard 14-day quarantine period remains, the guidance released last month has allowed for individuals to have an opportunity to reduce that to 10 days provided:

- The individual does not develop any symptoms or clinical evidence of COVID-19 infection during daily symptom monitoring for the 10 days after the last exposure; and,
- Daily symptom monitoring continues through day 14 after the last exposure.

“Although the focus in recent weeks has been on the vaccine rollout, we must continue masking, maintaining a distance from others, regularly and properly handwashing, and following full quarantine and isolation guidance,” said Dr. Josh Meyerson, Medical Director. “Residents cannot forget these important safety measures while awaiting their turn to receive the vaccine. There is excitement around scheduling appointments, however, administering this vaccine takes time and careful planning to ensure (the medicine) temperature is controlled, and doses are used in full. We continue to ask that residents remain patient and monitor our website, press releases, and Facebook for updates on the latest information about vaccine availability and scheduling.”

On Wednesday, MDHHS announced that Phase 1B and adults 65 and older will be eligible to receive the vaccination starting January 11 **dependent on local health department vaccine supply**. Currently, we are not ready to begin scheduling vaccination for this group because we are working to finish vaccinating Phase 1A. Through a partnership with Area Agency on Aging of Northwest Michigan and United Way of Northwest Michigan, a hotline for seniors has been set up to streamline the registration process. Callers should be prepared to share their name, age, email address if available, phone number, address, county and if they have access to transportation to get to a vaccination site within 30 miles of their home. If you are 65 or older, call the senior hotline number at 231-715-5557 to schedule the COVID-19 vaccine through the health department.

*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).*

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The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is reporting 20 new cases today: Antrim (5), Charlevoix (2), Emmet (6), and Otsego (7) counties, and 1 COVID-19 associated death in Antrim county. As of 4 p.m. today, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan is reporting:

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (733), Charlevoix (884), Emmet (1,279), and Otsego (1,056);
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (501), Charlevoix (718), Emmet (1,011) and Otsego (815);
- Confirmed COVID-19 associated deaths in the following counties: Antrim (12), Charlevoix (10), Emmet (33), and Otsego (25).

The State of Michigan is reporting 516,376 cases and 13,132 deaths.

Stay up to date on the latest information in the Health Department of Northwest Michigan jurisdiction by [liking and following our Facebook page](#) and visiting our [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#). To locate a testing facility, visit the [Michigan COVID-19 Test Finder website](#). To track the risk levels of COVID-19 pandemic indicators, visit the [MI Safe Start Map website](#). For more information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, visit the MDHHS [vaccine website](#) or the [CDC vaccine website](#).

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