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Health Department of Northwest Michigan COVID-19 Update

Health department distributes pharmacy toolkit, providing safe vaccination guidelines for area residents

With multiple access points for COVID-19 vaccinations in our communities, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan worked to create and distribute an informational [toolkit for pharmacies](#). This week the health department's environmental health staff hand delivered and discussed the pharmacy toolkit and its purpose with several pharmacists and store managers across its four-county jurisdiction.

"In our (environmental health) division we are working predominately with the overwhelmed food service community, and I often forget how many other industries are also working diligently to fight this virus," said Michele Mapes, Environmental Health Sanitarian for the Health Department of Northwest Michigan, who helped distribute and discuss the pharmacy toolkits.

The pharmacy toolkit provides information and ideas to ensure the safety measures in place over the last year to stop the spread of COVID-19 - such as masking, distancing, and hand hygiene - are incorporated into the planning and logistics of every step during each vaccination clinic.

"This was an eye-opening experience for me. The community pharmacies were very receptive and appreciative of the guidance the toolkit provided. A comment that resonated with me during one of my visits with a pharmacist was, 'Thank you for the information. We are all in this together!' I am a big proponent of this in person communication and felt this pharmacist's comment was a strong reminder that many people, not just our agency, continue to be under tremendous stress in an effort to ensure the health and safety of our communities," Mapes said. "Working together and supporting one another, including sharing information such as this toolkit that our agency provides, truly keeps our community connected and, 'all in this together.'"

Though the toolkit is geared towards pharmacies, other eligible providers vaccinating during this pandemic can use the suggestions and ideas within the pharmacy toolkit to continue promoting safety and preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Lisa Peacock, Health Officer, said, "given the nature of pharmacies being within the walls of a facility doing other business, or if it is a standalone, holding vaccination clinics creates additional foot traffic in and out of the facility. Our goal in creating the pharmacy toolkit is to support these facilities in providing safer vaccinations for residents, similar to how we have supported other sectors of business from the onset of this pandemic last year with various business toolkits and resources for their facility. These suggestions ensure all clients, patrons, or visitors to these sites feel comfortable and safe when in their place of business," she said.

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.

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Today, March 11, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan is reporting 38 new cases: Antrim (11), Charlevoix (6), Emmet (6), and Otsego (15) counties. As of 4 p.m. today, the health department is reporting:

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (1,001), Charlevoix (1,079), Emmet (1,571), and Otsego (1,272).
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (868), Charlevoix (975), Emmet (1,352) and Otsego (1,017).
- Confirmed COVID-19 associated deaths in the following counties: Antrim (20), Charlevoix (13), Emmet (38), and Otsego (27).

The State of Michigan is reporting 603,375 cases and 15,729 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](#).