



**MEDIA CONTACT:**  
Laurel Johnson, PIO  
O: 231-347-5628  
[l.johnson@nwhealth.org](mailto:l.johnson@nwhealth.org)  
[www.nwhealth.org](http://www.nwhealth.org)

**March 24, 2021**

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

### **Spike in COVID cases means ‘not time to let down our guard’**

In the last seven days, an alarming 302 COVID-19 cases have been identified within the four-county jurisdiction of the Health Department of Northwest Michigan. Since the first reported case in March 2020, more than 5,300 total cases have been reported in Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego counties.

“We haven’t seen this large of a spike in cases since last fall so it’s alarming and sends a message that we need to be vigilant to slow the spread of this virus,” said Lisa Peacock, Health Officer. “As health professionals, we are making every effort to get people fully vaccinated but all of us have the responsibility to keep up our end of the bargain and take precautionary measures to stop this virus. Now is not the time for us to let down our guard.”

From March 1 – March 24, 702 COVID-19 cases have been reported in Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego counties. Today we are reporting case investigation information for those cases.

- Age:
  - 0-12 years – 64 cases
  - 13-19 years – 148 cases
  - 20-29 years – 92 cases
  - 30-39 years – 97 cases
  - 40-49 years – 108 cases
  - 50-59 years – 86 cases
  - 60-69 years – 65 cases
  - 70-79 years – 27 cases
  - 80-89 years – 10 cases
  - 90-99 years – 2 cases
  - Unknown at the time of this report: 3 cases
- Symptomatic: 495 cases; Asymptomatic: 30 cases; Unknown/not reported: 177 cases
- 145 cases associated with known outbreaks related to the school population and employment settings where close contact occurs
- 12 cases are currently or were hospitalized

Testing and case investigation have stepped up to quickly identify and contain cases. Yesterday, the health department was notified of two cases of the B.1.1.7 COVID-19 variant in Otsego County. Previously, one case was identified in Charlevoix County. Health department staff treat a variant case the same as any other identified case with case investigation and contract tracing, and the individuals

*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).*

###

are following isolation guidance. Research shows that the B.1.1.7 variant is more easily spread than other variants.

The good news is that based on the latest evidence, current tests and vaccines available for COVID-19 work effectively against this variant, Peacock noted.

“We know the three coronavirus vaccines - Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson and Johnson (Janssen) - are all safe and effective against COVID-19,” Peacock said. “In three months since we started vaccinating our residents, we have administered more than 27,000 doses in Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego counties. Approximately 36% of residents 16 and older have received their first (initial) dose and almost 68% of those 65 and older have received their first (initial) dose. 23.9% of our population 16 and older have received their second (completion) dose. This is such great progress and is very encouraging,” she said.

Anyone who has any symptoms or with known exposure to COVID-19 should get tested and quarantine themselves. Residents should register for vaccination and schedule their appointment as soon as they are able as fully vaccinated individuals are unlikely to get the virus. In the rare occasion they are diagnosed with the virus, they typically experience less severe disease.

A flyer listing local organizations offering COVID-19 vaccination appointments is available [here](#).

Today, March 24, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan is reporting 55 new cases: Antrim (16) Charlevoix (6), Emmet (9), and Otsego (24) counties. As of 4 p.m. today, the health department is reporting:

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (1,114), Charlevoix (1,153), Emmet (1,638), and Otsego (1,494).
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (906), Charlevoix (992), Emmet (1,410), and Otsego (1,050).
- Confirmed COVID-19 associated deaths in the following counties: Antrim (20), Charlevoix (13), Emmet (38), and Otsego (28).

The State of Michigan is reporting 637,645 cases and 15,935 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](#).