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

**Health official: Cases down, vaccines up - 'a time of hope'**

Officials with the Health Department of Northwest Michigan see signs of hope as vaccination rates rise, pandemic risk indicators trend downward, and the governor is lifting capacity limits for outdoor events beginning June 1. Additionally, indoor capacity limits will increase to 50%, allowing indoor social gatherings such as weddings and funerals to move closer to normalcy. As of July 1, the governor announced yesterday that the state will no longer limit capacity at indoor or outdoor gatherings.

In her announcement yesterday, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer indicated the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) will likely release an updated epidemic order early next week, reflecting these changes. Throughout the month of June, people who are not yet fully vaccinated will still be required to mask up while indoors.

To align with the downward trending of cases and positivity, the upward trend of vaccination rates, as well as the new guidance and orders issued by state and national authorities, effective immediately, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan is lifting the [Public Health Advisory](#) issued on November 23, 2020.

To reach residents in all corners of their four-county jurisdiction, the health department continues to branch out into neighborhoods with pop-up clinics. Anyone 12 and over can walk into a clinic for a vaccination, although minors need to attend a Pfizer clinic and be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

Across northern Michigan, residents have been working hard towards a return to normalcy yet may find themselves somewhat confused by the mask-or-no-mask quandary, and exactly what rules and guidelines apply and when. Although it's a time of hope, it is also a time of patience and understanding, health officials say.

"As we begin to see more people out in public without a mask, it is understandable that this brings feelings of joy and hope to some but feelings of anxiety and uncertainty to others," said Lisa Peacock, Health Officer. "It is another time of transition where patience with each other is critical. The stress of transition is something familiar yet still difficult as everyone navigates this uncertainty. However, this is a time of hope and we can and should focus on the things that we know: daily cases and positivity are currently decreasing steadily across the nation, state, and region; the COVID vaccine is widely available for everyone ages 12 and up and all three formulations are safe and effective; and finally, being fully vaccinated now brings certain freedoms including no longer needing to mask or distance in most situations, no need for disruptive quarantine after exposure to COVID, reduced need for testing and relief from travel restrictions!" Peacock explained.

*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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Although things are looking up, Peacock noted we are not completely out of the woods yet. “Not everyone across the globe is experiencing the widespread vaccination coverage we are seeing in the United States and new variants of the virus continue to emerge in different areas,” she said. “However, it is critical now to keep our eyes on the clear goal of vaccinating as many people as possible. This is our most powerful tool in protecting all of us from new variants and continued transmission which leads to cases, outbreaks, hospitalizations, and deaths.”

Walk-ins are welcome at all upcoming COVID-19 vaccination clinics, or people can make a reservation by clicking on the link provided for each clinic location listed below. As clinics, especially pop-up locations are frequently added, visit the website [www.nwhealth.org](http://www.nwhealth.org) for the most up-to-date clinic location listings.

**Monday, May 24**

- Mancelona Public Schools Transportation Garage, 430 Dale Ave., Mancelona, 1-5 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor) or **J&J** (must be 18 or older). To schedule an appointment for the Pfizer vaccine: [Click Here](#)

**Tuesday, May 25**

- Great Lakes Center for the Arts, 800 Bay Harbor Dr, Bay Harbor, 8:30 - 10:30 a.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor) or **J&J** (must be 18 or older). To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

**Wednesday, May 26**

- Helena Township Hall, 8751 Helena Rd., Alden, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Vaccine: **Moderna** (must be 18 or older). To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)
- Ellison Place, 150 Dale Dr., Gaylord, 1-4 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor). To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

**Thursday, May 27**

- Charlevoix Co. Shirley Roloff Northside Center (Old Elem. School), 13513 Division St., Charlevoix, 1-6:10 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor). To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)
- Emmet County Fairgrounds, 1129 Charlevoix Ave., Petoskey, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor). To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

**Friday, May 28**

- East Jordan City Picnic Pavilion, 151 Spring St, East Jordan, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor) or **J&J** (must be 18 or older). To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

**Saturday, May 29**

- Mancelona Bass Festival, noon-2:30 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor) or **J&J** (must be 18 or older). Walk-up available; no appointments.

The calendar on the website [www.nwhealth.org](http://www.nwhealth.org) lists clinics currently scheduled through June 25.

Today, May 21, 9 new cases were reported: Antrim (0), Charlevoix (0), Emmet (3), and Otsego (6) counties. As of 4 p.m. today, the health department is reporting:

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (1,615), Charlevoix (1,653), Emmet (2,362), and Otsego (2,338).
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (1,460), Charlevoix (1,500), Emmet (2,065), and Otsego (2,010).

- Confirmed COVID-19 associated deaths in the following counties: Antrim (28), Charlevoix (20), Emmet (40), and Otsego (40).

The State of Michigan reported 882,189 cases and 18,853 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](#).