



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

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

**Delta variant identified in Emmet County;  
Guidance provided on booster shot for immunocompromised individuals**

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) State Laboratory has notified the Health Department of Northwest Michigan of the first identified case of the Delta (B.1.617.2.) variant in Emmet County. The Delta variant was identified through routine lab surveillance of testing samples.

The Delta variant – a much more transmissible strain of COVID-19 – is quickly becoming prevalent in the United States. Only a small percentage of COVID-19 positive test samples are sent on for genetic sequencing to identify any variant strains. Therefore, it is likely there are more unidentified cases of the delta variant across the northern Michigan region.

“The most powerful tool we have against further spread and mutation of the virus is the vaccination. We are urging those who are not yet vaccinated to get the shot and asking everyone to take extra precautions to prevent the strain from rapidly spreading across our communities,” said Lisa Peacock, Health Officer for the Health Department.

Continue practicing mitigation strategies to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 and variants, including Delta. These strategies include:

- Getting the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Wearing a mask around others in crowded indoor or outdoor areas, especially in counties with substantial and high community transmission, regardless of vaccination status.
- Staying six feet apart from others.
- Washing hands often.
- Staying home when you feel ill and getting tested if you have symptoms.
- Ventilating indoor spaces.
- Getting a COVID test if you have been exposed to someone who has tested positive 3-5 days after exposure. Persons with symptoms are encouraged to get tested promptly, isolate from others until test results are known, and those exposed should quarantine promptly even if they are not ill.

“The Delta variant is more contagious and by the time it has been identified, an infected individual(s) may have already exposed many more people,” said Dr. Joshua Meyerson, Medical Director.

“Vaccination is more important than ever. The COVID-19 vaccines show effectiveness against variants and reduce the risk of serious illness that lead to hospitalization or death.”

As students are returning to college or university campuses soon, the health department welcomes them to any vaccination clinics in the area. Students and their parents should contact their college/university to learn more about COVID-19 precautions and other vaccination requirements for

*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 fall semester. The Pfizer vaccine is available for anyone 12 and older (with parent/guardian permission) and the Moderna vaccine for anyone 18 and older.

On Friday, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) modified the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to allow for the administration of an additional dose (i.e., third dose) of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine after an initial 2-dose primary mRNA COVID-19 vaccine series. An additional dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine after an initial 2-dose primary mRNA COVID-19 vaccine series should be considered for people who are moderate to severely immunocompromised due to a medical condition or receipt of immunosuppressive medications or treatments. These conditions and treatments include but are not limited to: Active treatment for solid tumor and hematologic malignancies; receipt of solid-organ transplant and taking immunosuppressive therapy; bone marrow or stem cell transplants; moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency; advanced or untreated HIV infection; and active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids (i.e.,  $\geq 20$ mg prednisone or equivalent per day), alkylating agents, antimetabolites, transplant-related immunosuppressive drugs, cancer chemotherapeutic agents classified as severely immunosuppressive, TNF blockers, and other biologic agents that are immunosuppressive or immunomodulatory. Additional information about Clinical Guidance for Michigan Providers Regarding Additional Dose of an mRNA COVID-19 Vaccine can be found [here](#).

The Health Department is requesting that persons seeking an additional dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer for 12 and older or Moderna for 18 and older) provide a note or prescription from their physician for the dose based on having a moderate to severe immunocompromising condition as [described by the CDC](#). “We urge individuals to discuss their condition with their physician and determine what is best for them,” Dr. Meyerson said.

The health department offers convenient COVID-19 vaccination clinics for all area residents and visitors 12 and older either by appointment ahead of time or simply walking in. Parent consent is required for minors. Anyone may call 800-432-4121 if they have questions or are not able to find a time or date that works for them and/or their child. Clinics offer client choice of Pfizer, Moderna or J&J unless otherwise noted. Upcoming clinics for walk-ins or appointments include:

**Tuesday, August 17**

- 1-4:30 p.m. - Health Department of Northwest Michigan, 95 Livingston Blvd., Gaylord. Vaccine: Pfizer, Moderna and J&J. To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)
- 4-6 p.m. - CLEO Picnic at Thurston Park, 7854 E Bradford St., Central Lake. Vaccine: Pfizer and J&J. To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

**Wednesday, August 18**

- 8:15-11:35 a.m. - Health Department of Northwest Michigan, 205 Grove St., Mancelona. Vaccine: Pfizer, Moderna and J&J. To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#).
- 1-4:30 p.m. - Health Department of Northwest Michigan, 3434 M-119, Harbor Springs. Vaccine: Pfizer and J&J. To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

**Sunday, August 22**

- 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Legs Inn, 6425 N. Lake Shore Dr., Cross Village. Vaccine: Pfizer and J&J. To schedule and appointment: [Click Here](#)

The calendar on the website [www.nwhealth.org](http://www.nwhealth.org) lists clinics currently scheduled through September 29.

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](#).