



MEDIA CONTACT:
Laurel Johnson, PIO
O: 231-347-5628
ljohnson@nwhealth.org
www.nwhealth.org

March 15, 2022

Health Department of Northwest Michigan COVID-19 Update

Looking back on first COVID-19 case 2 years ago

For the past two years, northern Michigan residents have been living with COVID-19 in their lives. Last Sunday, March 13, marked the two-year anniversary from the date when the first COVID-19 case was reported in a resident in the Health Department of Northwest Michigan jurisdiction.

Since then, the community has pulled together to get vaccinated, wear their masks, wash their hands, and socially distance to help stop the spread of the coronavirus. Today, we are celebrating relatively low numbers of cases and the ability to gather with family and friends in our community.

On this anniversary, it is important to remember the sacrifices made that have led us to this recovery phase, said officials with the Health Department of Northwest Michigan.

In the early stages of the virus spread, personal protective equipment was sparse, a vaccine was nonexistent, and little was known about this new coronavirus. Yet, Health Department of Northwest Michigan staff, as well as officials with hospitals and emergency management systems, governments, schools, businesses and multiple community partners all came together to battle this virus affecting all our lives.

“From day one, Health Department of Northwest Michigan staff have shifted responsibilities quickly and without question to meet the needs of the community, whether through helping with case investigation, testing, or vaccinations,” said Amanda Thompson, Director of Family Health Services. “Staff’s primary responsibility was to help keep the community safe and they went to extreme lengths to do so.”

On December 17, 2020, the COVID-19 vaccine arrived and health department staff “administered our first dose with clinics planned in all four counties the very next day,” Thompson said. “Staff were prepared and ready and did an exceptional job of implementing our community vaccination plans. Community members had tears in their eyes as they entered our clinics and felt a sense of hope in protecting themselves and their family. The words of appreciation and gratitude for the opportunity to be vaccinated as well as the operation of the community vaccination clinics kept the staff going as they administered almost 63,000 vaccines since that first shot,” she added.

Medical Director Dr. Josh Meyerson noted that over the past two years much has been learned about the transmission of what was a novel virus. “Since then, we have lost nearly a million U.S. lives, but with time have progressed from initially having limited resources and tools to prevent and treat COVID-19

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.

###

disease to the availability of life saving vaccines and treatments that will, going forward, greatly reduce the public health impact of the pandemic,” Dr. Meyerson said.

Health Officer Lisa Peacock thanked the staff and the community for their efforts. “I can’t express the gratitude I feel for our dedicated staff, community partners and our community as a whole. It takes all of us to ensure the public health system functions effectively and northern Michigan is a shining example of partnership and collaboration!” Peacock added.

[Data](#) collected by the health department show that since March 13, 2020, in the four-county jurisdiction of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego counties:

- More than 21,000 cases have been reported and 300 COVID-19-related deaths have been reported as of March 8, 2022. Each death is a tragedy, sadly affecting loved ones and friends, and impacting our community in many ways, health officials stress. And, many more people have been hospitalized, and some still live today with lasting symptoms.
- Almost 135,000 vaccines have been administered by the health department, health providers, and pharmacies. Of that total, almost half of the doses have been administered by the Health Department of Northwest Michigan at more than 400 clinics across the region.
- More than 70% of residents 16 and older have received at least one dose.

While it is great news that we are in the [recovery phase](#), as defined by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, it is still advisable to take precautions based on your individual health conditions and feelings about risk for you and your family. Additional information can be found:

- MDHHS [updated guidance on masking](#)
- The CDC’s new [COVID-19 Community Levels](#)
- The health department [convenient COVID-19 vaccination clinics](#) across its four-county region of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego counties.
- The health department [testing clinics](#) availability and no symptoms or doctor's order is necessary. All ages are welcome, and no appointment is needed, although pre-registration via [this link](#) or by calling 1-800-432-4121, will save time at the testing location.
- Testing is also available at the health department’s new mobile clinic. For the mobile unit schedule, [click here](#).

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](#).

CUTLINE:

Pictured is Scott Cischke giving a thumbs up after receiving his vaccination at a community COVID-19 vaccination clinic held at Emmet County Fairgrounds last year. On March 13, 2020, the first COVID-19 case was reported within the Health Department of Northwest Michigan jurisdiction, and on Dec. 17, 2020, the first vaccine was administered.



COVID-19 CASE DATA

MARCH 9- MARCH 15, 2022

	Total New Cases	Avg. Daily Cases	New Deaths
--	--------------------	---------------------	---------------

Antrim	14	2.0	1
--------	-----------	------------	----------

Charlevoix	7	1.0	1
------------	----------	------------	----------

Emmet	10	1.4	2
-------	-----------	------------	----------

Otsego	26	3.7	1
--------	-----------	------------	----------

*Death attributed to
another county



HEALTH
DEPARTMENT
of Northwest Michigan

Public Health Information Line: 1-800-386-5959

More COVID data: www.nwhealth.org/covid19



nwhealthdepartment