

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Weekend Update:

[March 15](#), 2020 at 4:00PM: No cases of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) have been confirmed in Berrien County at this time. There are now thirty-three (33) cases of [COVID-19 in Michigan](#).

Over the weekend, Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed [Executive Order 2020-6 and Executive Order 2020-7](#), effective immediately, ordering all health care facilities, residential care facilities, congregate care facilities, and juvenile justice facilities to prohibit any visitors that are not necessary for the provision of medical care, the support of activities of daily living, or the exercise of power of attorney or court-appointed guardianship for an individual under the facility's care; are not a parent, foster parent, or guardian of an individual 21 years old or younger who is under the facility's care; are not visiting an individual under the facility's care that is in serious or critical condition or in hospice care; and are not visiting under exigent circumstances or for the purpose of performing official governmental functions. Additionally, beginning as soon as possible but no later than [Monday, March 16](#) at 9:00am, these facilities must assess for COVID-19 symptoms and risk factors all individuals not under their care who are seeking entry into their facilities. The facilities must deny entry to any individual with these symptoms or risk factors. The order's restrictions will remain in place until [April 5](#), 2020 at 5:00pm. The Berrien County Health Department has been working with these organizations to ensure their ability to comply with these orders in a manner rooted in science and good public health practice.

At a press conference on Sunday, [March 15th](#), Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced [Executive Order 2020-8](#), which temporarily imposes enhanced restrictions on the excessive pricing of goods, materials, emergency supplies, and consumer food items. These enhanced restrictions go into effect on [March 16](#), 2020 at 9:00am, and will remain in place until [April 13](#), 2020 at 11:59pm.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) launched of a statewide hotline to respond to health-related questions about COVID-19. The hotline will be open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 1-888-535-6136. Public health and other experts will answer health-related questions. The Berrien County Health Department is still maintaining our hotline to answer questions locally at 1-800-815-5485. BCHD's hotline is staffed M-F from 8:30-5:00pm; voicemails left over the weekend will be returned within 24 hours.

The situation continues to change quickly. It is important for the community to work together to slow the potential spread of illness and refer to official sources of reliable information.

Response Actions

The Berrien County Health Department continues to work quickly to digest and synthesize the implications of the announcements over the past several days and how that will impact our community partners and our community at large. BCHD has been in contact with the community organizations and entities that are impacted by the recent Executive Orders to ensure that they have a plan in place to comply with the orders.

BCHD continues to coordinate with federal, state, and local officials, as well as institutions, businesses, schools, and community organizations to be ready for additional actions should we have local cases and community transmission.

BCHD will host another conference call on Tuesday, [March 17th](#) at 3:00PM for community partners to get updates and ask questions. Call information is as follows:

Call Number: Please email publichealth@bchdmi.org for call information.

All community partners are encouraged to spread the word of the BCHD hotline available at 1-800-815-5485 to hear a daily recorded update or have the option to speak to a staff member or leave a message. Current hours for this hotline are weekdays 8:30 am-5:00 pm. Community partners can also access us via email at publichealth@bchdmi.org.

COVID-19 Testing

The Berrien County Health Department is working with health care providers to test individuals as needed. Individuals with concerns or symptoms should call their health care provider first with questions. Spectrum Health is offering free COVID-19 virtual screenings 24/7 to people in the state of Michigan who are experiencing symptoms at 616.391.2380. Callers will be scheduled for a free virtual screening and Spectrum Health doctors will determine if further testing or evaluation is needed.

Prevention

There is currently no vaccine available to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. Read the [CDC's framework for mitigation](#) of COVID-19.

Travel:

Older adults and people of any age with serious chronic medical conditions are at increased risk for severe disease and should consider postponing nonessential travel. Travelers should monitor their health and limit interactions with others for 14 days after returning from travel. Travelers that are sick with fever, cough, or have trouble breathing should stay home. Refer to the [CDC's current travel advisories](#).

Playdates/Small Group Gatherings:

People are encouraged to limit playdates and other small group gatherings, especially with those who fall into a [high risk category](#). If small gatherings are happening, take precautions such as washing hands often, cover coughs/sneezes, clean and disinfect surfaces frequently, and stay home if you are sick.

This situation may change quickly. Refer to these sites for current information:

Berrien updates: <http://www.bchdmi.org>

Michigan updates: www.michigan.gov/coronavirus

National updates: <http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19>

Information current as of [March 15th, 2020](#).