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Health Department of Northwest Michigan COVID-19 Update

**Health Department adjusting contact tracing, case investigation processes
*Omicron variant detected in Emmet, Otsego counties***

Due to significant case increases as the COVID-19 Omicron variant spreads in Michigan and locally, combined with waning public participation in contact tracing and case investigation, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan pandemic response will begin shifting away from universal contact tracing and case investigations to focus on high priority community groups and those in congregate settings.

In addition, today, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) notified the Health Department of Northwest Michigan that the Omicron variant of COVID-19 has been identified in two Emmet County and one Otsego County resident. Residents were tested on December 27 and 30, 2021. Previously, the health department was notified of cases involving residents in Antrim and Charlevoix counties. Determining which variant is present in an individual's test sample requires genomic sequencing, which is only conducted on a percentage of positive tests and can often take a few weeks.

"With more than 10,000 new COVID-19 case referrals per day being reported across Michigan and hundreds in our four-county jurisdiction, and the Omicron variant surge expected to continue, individual level case investigation and contact tracing are no longer as effective with respect to controlling COVID-19 transmission on a population level," said Lisa Peacock, Health Officer with the Health Department of Northwest Michigan. "We will continue to provide guidance, education, and support for our communities at various levels so that people know what their test results mean and how to best move forward limiting the spread of infection to their friends and family as well as monitor and provide outbreak investigation and infection prevention support for long-term care facilities, shelters, schools and other congregate-like settings," Peacock added.

Health Department officials want to remind residents of four key points amid case increases and the Omicron variant being detected in all four counties within the jurisdiction:

1. Stay home if sick and experiencing any [symptoms of COVID-19](#).
2. Get tested if symptomatic or once 5 days have passed after an exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19. Testing locations in Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego County can be found [here](#). Stay home until results are received.
 - a. Did you use a home self-test and receive positive results? Report your positive status to get resources and support from the health department by visiting www.tinyurl.com/HomeTest-Positive.

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.

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3. Wear a mask when out in public settings correctly and consistently, whether fully vaccinated or unvaccinated, as an extra layer of protection. See the CDC's guide on masks [here](#).
4. Get vaccinated and boosted. The safe and effective vaccinations are offered at a number of local pharmacies and at health department clinics. See a list of locations in Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego County [here](#) or visit the health department calendar of clinics for [5-11 year olds](#), and [12 and older](#) to self-schedule an appointment.
 - a. Wondering if you are eligible to receive a booster? See the U.S. FDA graphic illustrating booster eligibility [here](#).

Individuals that test positive with results reported directly to the health department, or [self-report their positive status](#), may receive a text message directly from a health department nurse with educational resources and offering support during their isolation period. This shift away from direct case investigation and contact tracing via phone call comes after a significant increase in cases.

Individuals with positive results reported to the health department may receive a text message or e-mail with a link to complete their own case investigation in the form of an online survey Patient Education Genius (PEG). The survey only asks for information that is allowable under the Public Health Code and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) Privacy Act, such as demographics, symptoms, occupation, attendance at public events or gatherings, and people with whom they may have been in close contact.

For a list of vaccine providers and locations in Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego counties, click [here](#). To schedule a COVID-19 vaccination appointment with the Health Department of Northwest Michigan exclusively for children 5 to 11 years old, [click here](#). To schedule a COVID-19 vaccination appointment with the health department for anyone 12 and older, [click here](#). A parent/guardian must accompany those younger than 18 to a COVID-19 clinic. Please bring an insurance card to the appointment. Anyone with questions or unable to find a time or date that works for them and/or their child may call the health department at 800-432-4121.

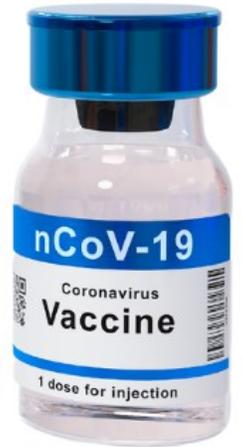
Stay up to date on the latest information in the Health Department of Northwest Michigan jurisdiction by [liking and following our Facebook page](#) and visiting our [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#). To locate a testing facility, visit the [Michigan COVID-19 Test Finder website](#). To track the risk levels 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:

The Alcona Health Center in Harbor Springs will be holding a walk-in COVID-19 vaccine clinic, in addition to distributing free at home COVID-19 test kits on January 22 from 8 am to 11 am. Test kits are available while supplies last. The event is open to the public and there is no out of pocket expense for either the vaccination or home test kits.

FIGHTING COVID TOGETHER

Walk-In COVID Vaccine Clinics



Free At-Home COVID Test Kits

While supplies last. Limits may be imposed.



Community Health Center of Northern MI

3434 M119 Suite C, Harbor Springs, MI

January 22nd from 8 am to 11 am

Who can attend?: Everyone. You do not need to be a patient of Alcona Health Center.

What to bring?: For vaccination we ask that you bring your photo ID and insurance card. If this is not your first dose of COVID vaccine, please be sure to have your vaccine card with you.

What is the cost?: There is no out of pocket expense for vaccination or these at-home test kits. Tests available while supplies last.

Learn more: alconahealthcenters.org