

From: Calhoun County Emergency Operations Center <lblair@calhouncountymi.gov>
Sent: Thursday, May 14, 2020 1:27 PM
To: treasurer@homermichigan.org
Subject: Press release: COVID-19 Semi-Weekly Media Update, 5-14-20



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, May 14, 2020

Semi-Weekly Media Update

From the Calhoun County Public Health Department

As of May 14, at 1 PM, Calhoun County has a cumulative total of 286 confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported to Calhoun County Public Health Department (CCPHD), with a total of 18 deaths attributed to COVID-19.

Testing in Calhoun County

With Governor Whitmer's introduction of the MI Safe Start plan, testing remains at the forefront of the COVID-19 discussion. Moving within this plan toward fully putting the pandemic behind us relies on the continued expansion of testing availability. Testing data affords us the knowledge of how far-spread the virus is in Calhoun and the state, and allows us to respond appropriately to contain resurgence. CCPHD's role in this crucial ingredient for a return to normalcy is to provide the behind the scene framework for more wide-spread testing.

Anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, difficulty breathing) should self-isolate and contact their healthcare provider or telehealth program to discuss whether testing should be conducted. Statewide, the criteria for testing has been expanded to include individuals with mild symptoms and essential workers who report to work in person, whether they have symptoms or not. Those who fit these criteria are strongly encouraged to seek testing. The state maintains a resource to help folks find a testing site at michigan.gov/coronavirus, but CCPHD reminds all seeking testing to call ahead to their preferred site to understand their testing hours and protocols.

CCPHD does not provide testing but rather works hand-in-hand with our area healthcare providers to ensure they have what they need to provide tests to the public. The role of CCPHD is support and facilitation.

- Contact tracing conducted by our Communicable Disease nursing staff help track the virus' spread through the community and connect those who have been exposed to testing options as early as possible. Early detection can keep symptoms mild providing a better opportunity for recovery to occur safely at home.

- Data collection and research by our epidemiologist have helped us pinpoint not only where Calhoun County sits in the COVID-19 pandemic curve, but also identify exactly where gaps exist in the available testing.
- A task force has been formed and is using this data to forge connections to new testing possibilities and fill the gaps within our community.

Throughout this pandemic response, CCPHD will also continue to update the people of Calhoun County with data as it becomes possible. Daily updates on the number of tests resulting in laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19, including breakdowns of positive cases by age, reported race and gender, and an epidemiological curve can be viewed on the COVID-19 alert at www.calhouncountymi.gov.

“We at the health department are committed to the fight against COVID-19 with the Calhoun community,” stated CCPHD Health Officer Eric Pessell. “I repeat this message because it is so important. This is hard work, but with everyone doing their part by washing their hands, maintaining social distancing, and wearing cloth face-coverings in public spaces, we are starting to see some positive change. We will see this through.”

Regular public health work does not pause for pandemic response. In addition to the efforts specific to COVID-19, CCPHD program-specific staff in Environmental Public Health, WIC (Women, Infants, and Children), NFP® (Nurse-Family Partnership), CSHCS (Children’s Special Health Care Services), and Clinic continue to provide modified services to Calhoun families and businesses. County residents with program-specific questions are invited to contact CCPHD at (269) 969-6990.

For updates from Calhoun County, about County operations and COVID-19 in Calhoun County, visit the County website, calhouncountymi.gov.

For updates from the City of Battle Creek, please visit battlecreekmi.gov/coronavirus.

The State’s COVID-19 Hotline is available for anyone who has questions or concerns related to the virus. The hotline is open seven days a week from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Call 1-888-535-6136. For state COVID-19 information, visit michigan.gov/coronavirus.

For information, contact

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