



AT YOUR SERVICE

NEWS FROM THE BERRIEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Volume 22, Issue 3

August 10, 2020

COVID-19 Data Update

Berrien County continues to have just below 10 new cases per day on average in the past two weeks. The percent positivity has been steady around 3.5% over the past two months. Berrien County remains the leading county in the State for conducting COVID-19 tests per capita and is recognized for our excellent response time and completion of contact tracing. Additionally, our healthcare system continues to be able to respond appropriately to COVID-19 as current hospitalization and ICU admissions remains well under capacity. (This was the original reason for the ‘flattening the curve’ goal).

Among Berrien County residents there have been no COVID-19 deaths throughout the month of August thus far and in July there were five deaths related to COVID-19. While of course we grieve the lives lost to COVID-19, our average age of death is 80 years old with a median age of 84 years (trends in these data have remained consistent since April and are reflected in national data). 68% of our deaths are in skilled nursing facility residents or are receiving hospice level care. There have been only two deaths in individuals less than age 60 years that were not in hospice or long term care. All deaths related to COVID-19 in Berrien County had at least two comorbidities and more than half had at least three. Consistent with national data, our top comorbidities are obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.

Berrien Current Data 08/10/2020

1,191	Confirmed Cases
9.8	Weekly average number of new cases per day
3.5%	Average % positivity (July– Aug)
65	Confirmed Deaths

Launch to Learn

Children do NOT become as sick as often as adults and children RARELY experience severe illness of COVID-19. While decisions such as opening schools carry a risk/benefit, we are strongly in favor of in-person learning, and agree with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) statement:

“As long as there are cases of COVID-19 in the community, there will be no way to prevent all risks of COVID-19 spread in schools. The goal is to keep the risk as low as possible and keep school and school activities as safe as possible. If students did not go to school, they would be at risk of COVID-19 illness from their interactions in the community. Yet going to school is very important to the development and well-being of our children. It gives them proper education, social and emotional skills, safety, reliable nutrition, physical/speech and mental health therapy, and opportunities for physical activity, among other benefits. Our goals are to ensure that the benefits of in-person education far outweighs any risks.”

Berrien County supports the Launch to Learn plan.

Children that have the most to benefit from in person learning, have the most to lose in its absence.

Protect the Vulnerable

Teachers and schools staff (especially those that are vulnerable with comorbidities) need to have safeguards in place that reduce the risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19. This is true for them, just as in many other sectors of workforces in our community.

Additional COVID-19 data and resources may be found at:

- www.cdc.gov/coronavirus
- www.michigan.gov/coronavirus
- www.bchdmi.org/COVID19

COVID-19 Testing

COVID-19 Testing is a valuable resource and should be utilized in the differential diagnosis of someone presenting with acute respiratory viral syndrome. The highest risk person is someone presenting these symptoms who has been in close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 positive. Overall the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention along with the Berrien County Health Department encourage the testing of symptomatic persons especially if they have been within close contact (exposure 15 minutes or greater within 6 feet of a persons, masked or unmasked). [Local testing resources](#) are Spectrum Health Lakeland, Intercare Community Health Network, Rite Aid in Bridgman, and Rite Aid in Niles.



@berriencountyhealthdepartment



@bchdmi

How to Reach Us:

Berrien County Health Department:
Phone: (269) 926-7121
Fax: (269) 926-8129
Address: 2149 E. Napier
 P.O. Box 706
 Benton Harbor, MI. 49023

Medical Director:
 Rick Johansen, M.D., M.P.H.
 (269) 927-5604
 rjohansen@bchdmi.org

Health Officer:
 Nicole Britten, M.P.H.
 (269) 927-5600
 nbritten@bchdmi.org

Deputy Health Officer:
 Courtney Davis, M.P.H.
 (269) 927-5607
 cdavis@bchdmi.org

Communications Manager:
 Gillian Conrad, M.P.H.
 (269) 927-5624
 gconrad@bchdmi.org

Epidemiologist:
 Guy Miller, M.P.H.
 (269) 927-5639
 gmiller@bchdmi.org