

ALLEGAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health Department Responds to State-Wide K-12 School Closure due to COVID-19

Preschools, daycares, and Head Start programs not impacted by mandated closure

(Allegan County, Michigan) March 13, 2020 – The Allegan County Health Department (ACHD) is responding to the announcement made late on March 12th by Governor Whitmer that effectively closed all K-12 schools starting March 16th through April 5th. This state-wide closure does not impact pre-schools, daycares, or Head Start programs at this time, however, these organizations and programs are able to make individualized closure decisions as needed.

Governor Whitmer also issued an executive order today March 13th as follows; “under this executive order, all events and shared-space assemblages of more than 250 people are temporarily prohibited in the state. Certain assemblages are exempt from this prohibition, such as those for the purpose of: industrial or manufacturing work, mass transit, or the purchase of groceries or consumer goods.” Michigan Department Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has identified these shared-spaces as but not limited to; a room, hall, cafeteria, theaters, sanctuary, and gallery.

ACHD recognizes these strategies to slow the spread of COVID-19 can be challenging to implement. We are working with our community partners to consider those challenges.

To date, Allegan County has not reported any cases of COVID-19, but with recently increased testing and cases reported in neighboring areas, it is expected that community transmission of the virus will occur.

“It is important the health care system remain available for those who are seriously ill and need immediate attention. The ACHD is concerned the system could be overburdened if healthy individuals and those with mild symptoms seek care prematurely. Individuals without symptoms do not need to be tested. Individuals experiencing mild symptoms are encouraged to remain home and call their medical provider for guidance. There are many proactive strategies we can take to slow the spread.” Health Officer, Angelique Joynes, MPH, RN states.

All Allegan County residents are encouraged to take every day, common sense precautions to avoid getting sick and protect others:

- Implement personal protective measures (stay home when sick, regular hand washing, cover coughs/sneezes, and clean frequently touched surfaces daily).
- Stop hand-shaking – use other noncontact methods for greeting one another (like an elbow bump).
- Create a household plan of action in case of illness in the household or further disruption of daily activities due to COVID-19 in the community.
- Individuals at increased risk of severe illness should consider staying at home and avoiding large gatherings or other situations of potential exposures, including travel.
- Consider canceling non-essential travel as crowded travel settings, like airports, may increase your risk of exposure to COVID-19.

ACHD staff are working day and night to monitor this evolving situation and will continue to provide new information to the community as things change. A hotline has been established to answer questions from the public at 1-269-686-4546 and more information can be found at the ACHD website at

www.allegancounty/health.org or by following ACHD on social media.

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