



Joint News Release

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For Immediate Release

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Berrien County Announces Additional Cases of COVID-19

Health Department will provide daily case count updates on website, hotline, social media

(Berrien County, Michigan) - The Berrien County Health Department was notified of three additional positive cases of COVID-19 over the weekend, cumulating in 5 confirmed cases as of Monday, March 23rd in Berrien County.

The first new positive case is an adult male over the age of sixty, and is the spouse of another positive case related to the Sandi Patty concert exposure reported earlier. The second newly identified positive case is also an adult male over the age of sixty, but is not associated with the Sandi Patty concert exposure. These two cases are self-isolating at home to recover from their symptoms.

The third case is an adult male, over the age of sixty who is in fair condition at Lakeland Medical Center in St. Joseph. It is not known at this time if this individual's COVID-19 exposure was related to the Sandi Patty concert.

The Berrien County Health Department is communicating directly with the people who had been in close contact with the individuals who have tested positive. All close contacts of the COVID-19 positive individuals will be asked to self-quarantine and will be assessed for symptoms and monitored appropriately. This contact tracing will help ensure that other individuals at risk of contracting COVID-19 are able to stay at home and prevent further transmission of the virus.

As testing for COVID-19 increases across the area, laboratories in Michigan have significantly increased capacity to test for COVID-19. It is expected that test results will be more expeditious moving into the future. However, due to so many labs now processing COVID-19 tests, it is difficult to know the exact number of how many tests are being submitted and processed daily. The Berrien County Health Department will report daily on the number of positive cases and the number of deaths in Berrien County by updating its website, social media channels, and hotline at 1-800-815-5485. Find more information about COVID-19 cases in the entire [State of Michigan](#) and the [State of Indiana](#).

“Based on the increase of COVID-19 cases across the region, residents can assume that there is a possibility the virus may be present when they are in public places in the community,” says Nicki Britten, health officer, Berrien County Health Department. “Everyone should be taking all recommended prevention measures by practicing social distancing and heeding Executive Orders that are in place. Our collective goal remains to slow the spread of cases as much as possible.”

Residents who are feeling sick are strongly urged to stay home and contact their healthcare provider by phone for guidance. Residents with symptoms of COVID-19, including fever, cough, or shortness of breath are encouraged to call the free Spectrum Health virtual screening phone line that is available to all Michigan residents at 616.391.2380 to see if testing is necessary. This will help prevent additional spread of illness and save critical healthcare resources for those at highest risk and those who may need supportive care.

All residents are encouraged to keep following these basic prevention steps to prevent the spread of the virus:

- wash your hands often with soap and water;
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands;
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing;
- avoid handshakes;
- keep at least six feet apart from others when in public;
- avoid contact with sick people who are sick; and
- stay home when you are sick.

The **Berrien County Health Department** and Spectrum Health Lakeland continue to work closely to slow the **spread of illness and provide reliable and accurate information to the public. Stay up-to-date** with COVID-19 in Berrien County by visiting www.bchdmi.org or www.spectrumhealthlakeland.org.

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