



BERRIEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

better health. stronger communities.

News Release

March 18, 2020

For Immediate Release

Contact: Gillian Conrad

(269) 927-5624

gconrad@bchdmi.org

Health Department Alters Program Operations in Response to COVID-19

(Berrien County, Michigan) – In an effort to slow the spread of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), the Berrien County Health Department is altering several program and service operations to help encourage further social distancing. The Health Department offices and clinics in Benton Harbor and Niles remain open to the public, although all services are available by appointment only; walk-ins are no longer being accepted. The Three Oaks office is closed effective Tuesday March 17 at 4:00pm until further notice.

The following program operations changes are in effect as of March 17th:

- Clinics are only accepting clients via appointment for immunizations, birth-control supply visits, and STD testing/treatment; walk-ins will no longer be accepted. Public Health Nurses are available via telephone for questions from clients.
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) will continue client appointments, but will move to as many tele-health visits as possible and will authorize and/or extend benefits over the phone.
- Water filters/replacement cartridges are still available for Benton Harbor residents to pick-up in office, but all distribution events are canceled. Residents can call 1-800-815-5485 (select option #2) to have a filter/cartridge mailed to them.
- Home visiting services and Children's Special Health Care Services are shifting to tele-health visits/consultations only.
- All Hearing and Vision pre-school screenings are canceled through the end of April.
- Unless otherwise noted, all community coalition meetings, events, classes, and other community gatherings are canceled until further notice.

All clients are asked to call to reschedule appointments if they are feeling ill. Any clients who are exhibiting symptoms may be asked to wear a facemask. Client appointments have been spaced throughout the day to maintain appropriate distancing for those visiting and working in the clinic.

As offices remain open, the public is encouraged to call with further questions about services that are available at this time. BCHD staff are working day and night to monitor this evolving situation with COVID-19 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 **1-800-815-5485** and more information can be found at the Berrien County Health Department website at www.bchdmi.org or by following BCHD on social media.

###