



**BERRIEN COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**
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News Release

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For Immediate Release

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Health Department Reminds of the Importance of Preventive Health Care Services

Parents should not delay childhood immunizations, hearing/vision screenings

(Berrien County, Michigan) – With many sectors of the community reopening now that the “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order has been lifted in Michigan, the Berrien County Health Department is reminding residents of the importance of seeking preventive health care services to best take care of themselves and their families.

According to a [recent report](#) from the Census Bureau, by mid-May, almost 94 million adults had delayed medical care because of the coronavirus pandemic across the United States. Untreated and uncontrolled chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD) can complicate COVID-19 and result in a higher risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death. It is vitally important to be proactive and keep up with regular check-ups, routine bloodwork, dental care, and cancer or other chronic disease screenings. Doctor’s offices and clinics (including the Berrien County Health Department) are open with expanding appointments. Many are still doing video or telehealth visits for patients who do not need to be seen in person.

The [American Academy of Pediatrics has estimated](#) that up to 40 percent of children scheduled for vaccinations in recent months have missed them, leaving a large percentage of children (and our communities) at higher risk for other dangerous communicable disease outbreaks, like measles, whooping cough, or chicken pox. The Berrien County Health Department strongly urges following the CDC [recommended immunization schedule](#) as the best way to ensure children are protected from potentially deadly diseases that can be prevented.

With the start of another school year just around the corner, it is crucial that parents and caregivers are ensuring their children are ready for school with required immunizations as well as hearing and vision screenings for those entering preschool/Kindergarten. BCHD is offering [several opportunities](#) for parents and caregivers to have their child’s ears and eyes screened at public screening sessions this summer that are offered by appointment.

While the Berrien County Health Department’s essential services never stopped, even when stay at home orders were in effect, the department has now resumed even more of its services this month. Clinical services, such as immunizations, sexual health (STD/HIV testing), WIC, and TB testing are all available by appointment only in the three office locations throughout the county. Other services, such as environmental health inspections, home visiting programming, and other community education have resumed in-person where

possible or continued with remote service delivery. In order to protect health and safety, clients and visitors are asked to wear a face covering when inside Berrien County Health Department buildings and should reschedule appointments or visits if they are feeling sick with any symptoms of illness. Anyone who wishes to make an appointment for a clinical service or inquire about a program offered are encouraged to call the Health Department's main line at 269-926-7121 or find more information at www.bchdmi.org.

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