

**Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department**  
**Community COVID Call Notes**  
**1/20/2021**

**When will the vaccine be available for school staff?**

We are beginning school vaccinations this week. However, due to the limited vaccine supply and the unpredictability in how much we receive each week we are not able to schedule schools out beyond one week. Our recommendation is that schools share information about vaccination with staff and think about how to facilitate scheduling as there is likely to be a very quick turn-around time once we know vaccine is available. Casey Petz from Suttons Bay shared his lessons learned.

The health department has partnered with Northwest Michigan Health Services so that they can use some of our vaccine allocation to vaccinate school staff.

**Who is eligible to receive vaccine through Munson?**

Munson initially focused on vaccinating health care workers, then opened it up to those over age 65 who were patients at Munson affiliated practices and have now opened it up to anyone over age 86 (soon to be lowered to age 82) and those over 65 who live in the same household. To schedule a vaccine through Munson, call 231-935-SHOT.

**Should people sign up for vaccine through multiple sites (e.g. Munson, health departments, employers, etc.)**

It is preferred that you register through only one site for vaccine. If your employer has registered your place of business, the health department will be contacting your employer when that group is eligible for vaccine. (Note: If you are over age 65 and your employer is not included in the current eligibility group, you may sign up as an individual).

**Can we use EMS to assist with vaccine administration?**

We currently have quite a few health department staff and volunteers who are able to administer vaccines, but at some point we might need assistance and will consider EMS for this role. However, we do still need volunteers for other roles in the vaccine clinics and EMS are particularly helpful with monitoring for post vaccine reactions or other duties.

**Many people are getting frustrated that they are not hearing anything about when they can get the vaccine. What can we expect?**

Currently eligibility for vaccine includes those who are health care workers, live in long term care or congregate facilities, frontline first responders, school and childcare staff and individuals over age 65. This is a very large group – in Benzie and Leelanau county an estimated 30,000 vaccine doses are needed to vaccinate everyone in this group. There are only 2 manufacturers producing vaccine in the country, so the demand far exceeds the supply and MDHHS estimates that it will be late spring before we will be able to expand vaccine eligibility and mid-summer before we have vaccinated everyone in the current priority group.

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/MI\\_COVID-19\\_Vaccination\\_Prioritization\\_Guidance\\_710349\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/MI_COVID-19_Vaccination_Prioritization_Guidance_710349_7.pdf)

The process right now is that the health department places a vaccine order on Wednesday and on Friday we are notified about how many doses we will receive the following week. Once we know how much vaccine is available, we open up appointments to ensure we use all that vaccine. We have lists of people who have pre-registered either on-line or through the senior hotline, and we send out scheduling information based starting with the earliest pre-registrations.

The health department has one larger location where we regularly hold clinics in each county, and will be adding in smaller outreach sites to increase accessibility as vaccine supply allows.

**For employers, should the second dose be staggered for employees that may need to be off due to side effects?**

There is currently no data that shows this is necessary. Most reactions are still fairly mild and are easily managed with over the counter medications such as Tylenol so do not keep people off work.

**Does Grand Traverse and Munson have a different process?**

Grand Traverse is not holding a waiting list and had 2000 appointments available this past week that were filled within an hour. Benzie-Leelanau sends batches of emails to those who have pre-registered (either online or through the senior hotline) starting with those who registered first. Munson appointments can be scheduled by calling 231-935-SHOT. We find out about vaccine supply on Fridays, so if you are checking GT website or calling Munson you should check frequently starting that day or the day before.

**Are there residency requirements for receiving the vaccine?**

The vaccine is a federal resource and therefore there are no state or county residency requirements – you can schedule your vaccine where it is most convenient.

**How are employers notified if they signed up their business?**

We will contact employers with scheduling information when their business is within the eligible priority groups for vaccination and as vaccine is available.

**What is the health department's opinion of the Great Barrington Declaration?**

The Great Barrington declaration has not really gone anywhere so we haven't released a formal statement, but we do not support it because it is not in alignment with current science.

**How long after the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose of vaccine can I safely interact with others?**

You can safely interaction approximately 1 week after the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose. We don't yet know exactly how long immunity lasts. Interestingly, Lisa spoke recently with a Respiratory virologist at UofM who suggested that stronger immunity may be obtained through the vaccine than infection because of how mild the infection is for some.

To note: at this time you are still required to quarantine after exposure even if you received both doses of vaccine. We anticipate that CDC will release updated guidance soon.