

# District Health Department No. 4



For Immediate Release  
Date: April 30, 2020  
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## District Health Department No. 4 Will Begin Reporting Probable and Recovered Cases by County

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On April 30, 2020, District Health Department No. 4 (DHD4) will begin reporting the number of probable COVID 19 cases and the number of recovered individuals for Alpena, Cheboygan, Montmorency and Presque Isle Counties, along with the current reporting of laboratory confirmed cases and deaths.

Probable cases of COVID-19 are defined as individuals who have been directly linked epidemiologically to a confirmed case and have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, but who were not tested. Probable cases were first detected when testing was very limited. Given that a positive COVID-19 test result would not change the measures taken by public health, since a probable COVID-19 case would already be quarantined when symptoms appear, these cases are labeled as probable instead of confirmed. Probable cases are treated as if they were a positive laboratory confirmed case and the actions taken are the same as for a confirmed case. This includes: self-isolation, active contact tracing and daily follow-up by DHD4 communicable disease team.

Denise Bryan, Health Officer at DHD4 states “Think of this disease as an iceberg. The laboratory-confirmed positive cases collected are the tip of the iceberg. Our probable and asymptomatic cases across the state that have not been measured can be seen as the bottom part of the iceberg. Going beyond the “tip of the iceberg” and reporting probable cases will give community partners the opportunity to learn more about this virus and plan appropriate public health actions.”

In terms of recovered individuals being reported, according to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), recovered individuals are defined as those who, within the Michigan Disease Surveillance System, has gone 30 days from onset of their symptoms or 30 days from testing positive with COVID-19 and has not died. DHD4’s first case was on March 29, 2020.

Although testing is being expanded, there continues to be limited capacity; therefore, testing agencies prioritize who gets tested based on Michigan Department of Health and Human Services guidance. If an individual who is reported as a probable case later receives a laboratory test confirming COVID-19 disease, they will then be counted as a confirmed case and removed from the count of probable cases. As more testing is done, reporting of probables may become unnecessary as more people who need test will get them.

DHD4 reminds residents it is critically important people should continue to follow social distancing guidelines, wear a cloth face covering when in public, and only leave their home for essential reasons. This will allow us to continue to minimize the number of people who get sick.

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