

District Health Department No. 4

For Immediate Release

Date: April 8, 2021

COVID-19 Variants Identified in Alpena County District Health Department No 4 Urges All to Continue COVID-19 Precautions

District Health Department No. 4 (DHD4) has been notified of four confirmed cases of the COVID-19 variant B.1.1.7 in Alpena County. The individuals have completed isolation. The cases were identified through routine active surveillance by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

The B.1.1.7 variant spreads more easily and is believed to be more contagious. Now, as more coronavirus variants have begun to dominate, it is crucial to continue taking COVID-19 precautions. Without these measures we will see large amounts of individuals having to quarantine due to COVID-19 exposures. This will have a direct impact on our schools and workplaces. Since Monday, DHD4 has had 176 new cases identified.

This dramatic rise in new cases seems to be driven by greater circulation of more contagious variants, as children and teens are engaging in in-person activities like sports, parties, and classes. Cases are rising among all age groups, but one of the largest numbers of new COVID-19 cases is among children ages 10-19, the first time that's happened since the start of the pandemic.

“We are asking everyone to do their part to curb this spike of COVID-19 cases in our community,” said Devin Spivey, DHD4 Community Health Director/Epidemiologist. “We are all feeling the COVID fatigue, but we must charge forward with our tried-and-true mitigation measures – washing our hands, wearing a mask covering our mouth and nose, and staying six feet away from others in tight spaces – they work. And, most importantly, get vaccinated as soon as you are able,” she said.

Based on available evidence, current tests and vaccines for COVID-19 also work against this new variant. Protective actions that prevent the spread of COVID-19 will also prevent the spread of the new variant B.1.1.7:

- Wear a mask covering mouth and nose around others
- Keep at least 6 feet apart from others
- Wash hands frequently
- Avoid crowded areas or indoor gatherings
- Ventilate indoor spaces if around others
- Seek testing if ill, exposed, or after travel
- PLEASE follow [isolation](#) or [quarantine](#) guidance if ill, exposed, or waiting on test results
- Get vaccinated when vaccine becomes available to you

This is a rapidly evolving situation. Further updates will be shared with the media and on www.dhd4.org/covid19 and on Facebook.

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