April 3, 2020

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Daily Update: April 3, 2020
Advice on Mask Use by the Public from the Medical Director

Coldwater, MI – The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency (BHSJCHA) is reporting updated information on case counts in the tri-county area. The number of positive cases in the 3-county jurisdiction as of 3 pm today includes 10 cases in St. Joseph County, 26 cases in Hillsdale County, 6 cases in Branch County and 19 at Lakeland Correctional Facility in Branch County.

Counts by County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Branch County</th>
<th>Hillsdale County</th>
<th>St. Joseph County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Positive Cases</td>
<td>6 + 19*</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Deaths</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
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*Cases in Lakeland Correctional Facility

Total cases statewide, from data compiled by MDHHS at 10 a.m. this morning and released at 3 pm today, are 12,744 with 479 deaths attributed to COVID-19. BHSJCHA remains committed to thorough investigation and communication with all individuals affected by COVID-19. The staff at BHSJCHA adhere to the MDHHS guidelines for testing and follow best practices for contact tracing and strictly adhere to patient privacy as required by HIPAA.

The wearing of masks by the public is a topic of increasing interest and Medical Director, Lauren Vogel, DO, MPH, weighs in on this topic and provides the following advice to residents in the tri-county region. “The data from infectious disease experts, and it is well referenced, does not recommend requiring the general public who do not have symptoms of COVID-19 like
illness to routinely wear cloth or surgical masks because there is no scientific evidence that they are effective in reducing the risk of virus transmission. Also, we need to preserve the supply of surgical masks for at-risk healthcare workers,” states Dr. Vogel. “It remains that social distancing and good hygiene are the best means of reducing COVID-19 spread.” Individuals with supplies of masks or other personal protection equipment are encouraged to donate those items to the county Emergency Management office so that they can be distributed to healthcare workers who are working to help people sickened by this disease.

BHSJCHA is asking anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 to self-isolate for 14 days to avoid potentially exposing others. And for individuals that have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19, to self-quarantine for 14 days and monitor themselves for fever, cough, and shortness of breath. COVID-19 symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus. Symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath.

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, people should:

- Stay Home. Stay Safe. Save Lives. in compliance with Governor Whitmer’s Executive Order
- Wash their hands
- Stay home when sick
- Avoid close contact with sick people
- Avoid touching their face
- Disinfect commonly touched surfaces
- When you must go out for groceries and other necessary supplies; only those people absolutely needed for the task should go, others should stay home.
- Keep six feet between yourself and others
- Work from home if you are a non-essential worker

People who are concerned that they may have COVID-19 should contact their healthcare provider and call ahead before visiting any healthcare facility. Mildly ill people are encouraged to stay home and contact their healthcare provider by phone for guidance. If you feel well, you do not need to be tested. Testing is determined based on risk assessment.

Information about the COVID-19 situation locally, and in Michigan is rapidly changing. For more information, visit www.bhsj.org.
BHSJCHA is committed to promoting wellness, preventing disease, providing health care, and protecting the environment. For additional information, contact your local health department office or visit www.bhsj.org and follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/BHSJCHA.

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Coldwater, MI 49036
(517) 279-9561

**Hillsdale County**
20 Care Drive
Hillsdale, MI 49242
(517) 437-7395

**St. Joseph County**
1110 Hill St.
Three Rivers, MI 49093
(269) 273-2161

**Sturgis Office**
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Wednesday – Friday

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