



James A. Barcia  
Bay County Executive

1200 Washington Avenue, Bay City, Michigan 48708  
(989) 895-4003 \* FAX (989) 895-4014  
[www.baycounty-mi.gov/Health](http://www.baycounty-mi.gov/Health)

Joel R. Strasz  
Public Health Officer

---

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: All Media

From: Joel Strasz, Public Health Officer – Bay County Health Department  
Clarence Sevillian, President/CEO – McLaren Bay Region

Date: November 19, 2020

Re: **McLAREN AND BAY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT ASK LOCAL RESIDENTS TO ACT IMMEDIATELY WITH COVID-19 CASES INCREASING**

**BAY COUNTY, MICHIGAN** – The Bay County Health Officer and the President/CEO of McLaren Bay Region (MBR) are urging Bay County residents who test positive for COVID-19 to immediately isolate, notify employers and close contacts of their conditions, and self-report to the Bay County Health Department. These actions are necessary to crush the current surge in cases of COVID-19. This appeal comes as the growing number of cases is driving increased hospitalizations and deaths in Bay County—13 so far this month--especially among our most vulnerable residents.

The on-going surge in new cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) among Bay County residents has exceeded the capacity of the Bay County Health Department (BCHD) to be timely in completing case investigations by telephone. It is no longer possible to contact every case on the same day the new infection is reported to BCHD. Tracing close contacts and notifying them of the need to quarantine has been delegated to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS).

Nevertheless it remains our goal that **ALL** cases in Bay County will be investigated. To optimize the efficiency and effectiveness of our efforts, BCHD asks all Bay County residents who have tested positive for COVID-19 to complete the [Case Interview Survey](#), a safe and secure tool to self-report your symptom history and provide identifying details for your close contacts.

**Please note this survey can only be completed if:**

- You are a resident of Bay County; **AND**
- Your [diagnostic test](#) (molecular or antigen test) was positive for COVID-19 (i.e., does not include results from antibody tests); **AND**
- BCHD staff have not already completed a full case interview by telephone.

The current surge has the potential to overwhelm the healthcare system, and so it is vital that everyone throughout our community take all the actions necessary to stop the spread of COVID-19.

1. Wear a mask: anytime you might end up being in close proximity to persons from outside your household.
2. Watch your distance: maintain at least 6 feet of separation from other persons whenever possible.
3. Wash your hands: using soap and water for at least 20 seconds or else using alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
4. Avoid poorly ventilated spaces: meet outdoors whenever possible if you will be gathering with other persons from outside your household.
5. Avoid crowds: limit the duration of time you spend in public venues and limit your number of close contacts among persons from outside your household.
6. Quarantine when exposed: if you were identified as a close contact to a person deemed infectious, remain at home until 14 days have elapsed since your most recent exposure to any infectious person.
7. Get tested: if you develop COVID-like symptoms, seek testing promptly and self-isolate while awaiting results.
8. Self-isolate when infected: if you test positive for COVID-19, remain at home until 10 days have elapsed since the onset of your symptoms (or since testing was performed if you remain symptom free).

Please do your part and help minimize the spread of COVID-19. For the latest and most accurate information regarding the COVID-19 please go to the Bay County Health Department website at <https://www.baycounty-mi.gov/Health/COVID19/>