

**BENZIE-LEELANAU DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
SPECIAL BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING  
Wednesday, March 18, 2020 3:00 p.m.  
Benzie Resource Center  
6051 Frankfort Highway  
Benzonia, Mi 49616**

Chairperson Gary Sauer called the meeting to order at 3:00pm.

**Members Present:**

Gary Sauer - Benzie County Board of Commissioners  
Tony Anson - Leelanau County Board of Commissioners  
Carolyn Rentenbach – Leelanau County Board of Commissioners  
Linda Farrell – Benzie County Board of Commissioners

**Members Excused:**

Dr. Barbara Conley - Leelanau County Member at Large

**Staff Present:**

Lisa Peacock – Health Officer  
Dr. Joshua Meyerson – Medical Director  
Dodie Putney – Director of Administrative Services  
Eric Johnston – Director of Environmental Health  
Michelle Klein - Director of Personal Health  
Chloe Willetts – Emergency Preparedness Coordinator  
Debbie Aldridge – Personal Health Supervisor  
Jenny Shafer – Registered Nurse (telephone)  
Roberta Besey – Registered Nurse (telephone)  
Jamie Leyland – Registered Nurse (telephone)  
Lauren Wolf – Social Worker (telephone)

**Guests Present:**

Mark Kuiper, MD – Crystal Lake Clinic  
Sara Swanson - Benzie County Prosecutor  
Mitch Deisch - Benzie County Administrator  
Chet Janik - Leelanau County Administrator (telephone)  
Kelly LaCross - Leelanau County Emergency Management Deputy Director (telephone)  
Rebecca Hubers - Benzie County Emergency Management Coordinator (telephone)  
Julie Tarr – Executive Director, ShareCare of Leelanau, Inc. (telephone)

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Approval of the Agenda:**

**Motion By:** Ferrell to approve the agenda as presented

**Seconded By:** Rentenbach

**Voice vote:** 4 yeas   0 nay   1 excused   **Motion carried**

**Public Comment** – None

### **Health Department Roles & Responsibilities in COVID-19:**

Lisa Peacock shared the role of public health in response to the COVID-19. The job in public health is to flatten the curve of the outbreak. The first line of defense is through social distancing and keeping sick people away from the healthy thus the issuance of the Governor's Executive Orders. The healthcare system must be protected, and we need to support them in maintaining their capacity to identify and care for the sick. Once notified that a resident has tested positive for COVID-19, the Health Department starts to do case investigation and contact tracing. It is noted that while this a public health crisis, every sector is affected and shares in the responsibility of protecting the residents. The Health Department needs the help of county leaders to ensure there is an effective community response. To make sure accurate information is delivered in a timely manner, the Health Department will be creating a staff liaison for each county. This person will serve as the county's point of contact to participate in planning and organization, communications as well as provide public health expertise when is needed. The public health incident command team is in the process of scaling down non-essential services while still maintaining the public health workforce.

### **COVID-19 Community Response Discussion:**

#### Questions:

1. Tony Ansoerge – Board of Health Member, Leelanau County – stated he knows nationally we are focused on flattening the curve on how many patients come in for medical care. We need to recognize that the United States does not have enough number of beds in America per capita. Have we looked at some of the closed facilities that use to be medical facilities can be reactive during the emergency situation, Northport? Maybe it is a manpower issue and not a facilities issue. Chloe Willetts stated that Munson Systems has to figure out what their surge capacity looks like and how do they deal with the sick. The Health Department does not have a lot of control over how the hospitals plan for their capacity needs. Dr. Meyerson also stated that there are plans with other acute care centers and the hospitals.
2. Tony Ansoerge – Board of Health Member, Leelanau County - understands that there will be people restricted to their homes, do we have a process in place to capture volunteers who would willing to help deliver supplies and medications to those under quarantine. It is a goal of the Health Department that, by bringing in a public health community liaison, we can help organize our community partners in getting volunteers out where needed. Chloe Willetts also stated that the Health Department has access to the Michigan Volunteer Registry where people can sign up with specific skills. Then the Health Department can look for specialized volunteers that are already “vetted”. There are organizations already offering services to help people that are restricted to their homes, pharmacies, Benzie Bus, United Way, etc. We need to ensure that volunteers are educated in safely providing services to the people they are helping so that they do not get sick or in turn get other people sick.
3. Dr. Kuiper, MD, Crystal Lake Clinic - gave an update on what they are trying to do at Crystal Lake Clinic. They have suspended non-essential and non-emergent health care services at this time. Biggest challenge is a lack of consistent public message on who should be tested and who should be seeking care. He has been answering telephone calls and there is not a clear message. A test went out on Friday and he does not have the results back yet. The public needs to know how they can best control their symptoms and who should they contact regarding their symptoms. Doctors are looking on the Internet on how to best handle these situations. Can the Health Department do a better job get information out to the public and the providers? The Health Department appreciates providers' feedback and we would love to hear of a better way to get information out to providers. The Health Department sends a lot of information out to the public to be clear as possible, but we cannot control what media publishes. The hospitals are taking the lead on testing facilities. The rapid changing information has proven to be a challenge. Munson implemented a nurse hotline which is staffed to focus on helping those who do not have a provider, helping clinicians who have

questions on testing and is staffed from 7 am to 7 pm, seven days a week. The State lab was overwhelmed with tests and thus there is a backlog.

4. Peachy Rentenbach, Board of Health Member – Leelanau County stated that there is a lot of miscommunication out in the public. Is there any practical information that can be shared that would help alleviate public fears? Peacock mentioned that the media needs to have accurate information and timely. What is given to them and what is published is up to the media and out of the control of the Health Department. Social media is used as a tool that we share information as well as 211. It is a challenge of getting timely and accurate information and needs to be multiple community partners getting the same message out. Peacock mentioned that CDC and MDHHS websites have been doing a great job in updating accurate information that can be shared on our website and social media changes.
5. Tony Ansoerge, Board of Health Member – Leelanau County commented that our health care workers themselves are going to get sick at some point. Is there a plan in place for when the first line of people get sick? The health care systems and the Health Department leadership have planned and worked for a number of years on being prepared. There are plans in place at the Health Department.
6. Peachy Rentenbach, Board of Health Member – Leelanau County wanted to talk about specific instances where residents get diagnosed. Residents are asking her questions on what they should do. The goal of public health is to have people that are healthy and to stay health. The Health Department looks as risk factors and will alert people who are impacted. It was agreed that the Health Department should add Board of Health members to information sheets distribution so they are kept informed on what information is going out so they can inform their residents. There is also a telephone number of 231-882-2197 where people can leave a message and the Health Department can call them back to answer their questions.
7. There is a social distancing recommendation that is a very effective method for preventing the spread of disease. Linda Farrell, Board of Health Member – Benzie County commented that social distancing is not about protecting yourself, but it is about protecting the community. If we all don't do social distancing, then it will not work. The goal is not to eliminate the disease but rather to control it. The Governor's executive order was put in place to help control the crowds.
8. Julie Tarr, Executive Director, ShareCare of Leelanau questioned if the Health Department liaison would also be coordinating with community partners like ShareCare. Peacock states that yes, Health Department personnel will continue to work with our community partners.

**April Board of Health Meeting Date:** The next meeting for the Board of Health will be Wednesday, April 22, 2020 at 2:00 pm. The meeting is tentatively set for 2:00 pm with a 1:00 pm Personnel and Finance Committee meeting. If allowed, the meeting may be a teleconference.

**Revised Travel Policy:** Lisa Peacock presented a revised travel policy for the Health Department that outlines guidelines for international and domestic travel for both business and personal purposes.

**Motion by:** Ansoerge to accept the BLDHD revised travel policy as presented effective March 18, 2020.

**Seconded by:** Rentenbach

**Voice vote:** 4 yeas    0 nays    1 excused    **Motion carried**

**Temporary Emergency Leave Policy:** Lisa Peacock presented a Temporary Emergency Leave policy for staff members who are impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. It is important to note that this policy does not include time associated with personal travel.

**Motion by:** Rentenbach to accept the Temporary Emergency Leave Policy with the addition of Item H under Purpose stating: Emergency leave is not to be used to supplant employee pay including, but not limited to, workmen's comp, disability insurance and unemployment insurance.

**Seconded by:** Ansortge

**Voice vote: 4 yeas 0 nays 1 excused Motion carried**

**Board Comments:**

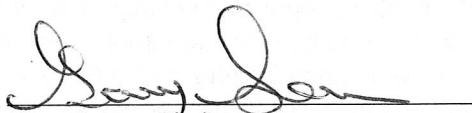
Ansortge stated a constituent questioned him that in Italy it was suggested not to take ibuprofen if you had COVID-19 and they should take Tylenol. Dr. Meyerson stated he has not received any guidance from the CDC and FDC and would hesitate giving that information. As updated information comes through to the Health Department, they will get the information out. It is important to refer people to credible sources.

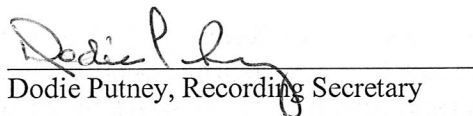
Ferrell commented that she appreciated the robust conversations that were done. She appreciates all the hard work that the staff have done.

**Public Comment-**none

**Board Comments-**none

**Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 4:33 pm

  
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Gary Sauer, Chair

  
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Dodie Putney, Recording Secretary