



KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

In the Pursuit of Extraordinary Governance...

**NEWS RELEASE FOR
IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
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Matt Johnson and Lyndi Warner
Public Information Officers
pio@kalcouny.com

Kalamazoo County Health Department Prioritizing Contact Tracing

*Health officials asks residents help stop the spread by taking
personal action and notifying close contacts*

KALAMAZOO, MI – Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department reports that Kalamazoo County COVID-19 cases are continuing to trend upward, thus placing a strain on the state and local public health departments. Even with assistance from Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) with disease investigation and contact tracing, capacity has been reached. The health department will start prioritizing disease investigation and contact tracing efforts. Therefore, individuals and their close contacts may not receive a phone call from Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department or MDHHS.

Individuals who receive a positive status are being asked to take the following steps immediately (See flyer on page 3):

- [Isolate](#) for 10 days. This means stay home except if you are in need of medical care.
- Notify your employer that you have tested positive for COVID-19.
- Notify all of your close contacts so they can [quarantine](#) for 14 days from the last date of their contact with you.
 - Close contacts are those who were within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes total in a 24 hour period during the time the person you tested positive was contagious.
 - Contagious period starts 2 days before symptoms appear or 2 days before positive test if no symptoms.
 - Close contacts should monitor themselves for symptoms. If symptoms arise, they should get tested.
 - Close contacts cannot test their way out of quarantine. Because the incubation period of this virus is long, close contacts must stay home for the full 14 days, even if a negative test result is received. A positive test result during quarantine changes a person's status from a close contact to a case and informs a timeline for isolation.
- Resume normal activities only when 10 days have passed since symptoms started (or test date if no symptoms), you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medications, and your symptoms have improved. Continue to wear your face mask, practice social distancing measures, and hand washing.

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

311 E. Alcott St. | Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Phone: 269.373.5200 | www.kalcouny.com/hcs

“Public health cannot do this alone. Even with our staff working at full speed, and we have been at full speed for the last eight months, we are not able to investigate or notify close contacts as quickly as is needed to stop the spread,” says Jim Rutherford, Health Officer of Kalamazoo County. “We’re asking residents to help us. We’re asking people to take ownership of their positive status when they receive it and to take the next steps to help us stop the spread,” says Rutherford.

During the month of October Kalamazoo County saw a significant increase of positive COVID-19 cases. On October 1, the percent positivity rate was 4.9% with the average number of daily cases at 46. On November 4, the percent positivity rate was 11.0% with the average number of daily cases at 98. By comparison, during the summer the average number of daily cases was under 20.

Effective immediately, the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department has made the decision to pivot and focus efforts on disease investigation and contact tracing for the following populations in order to maximize staffing resources and prevent outbreaks amongst vulnerable individuals:

- Individuals attending K-12 schools and school functions.
- Long-term care facilities (LTCs)
- High-risk congregate settings

The health department will continue to consult with organizations such as businesses, schools, healthcare systems, and public safety on isolation and quarantine recommendations as well as best practices to reduce COVID-19 transmission.

It is important to note that the most effective public health recommendations continue to be wearing a face covering or mask, maintaining six feet from others, avoiding social gatherings, and washing hands frequently. Crowded, indoor gatherings are particularly high risk and should be avoided.

Informational flyer follows this press release on page 3.

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Kalamazoo County Government
Health & Community Services Department

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IF YOU TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19



With the increase in COVID-19 cases in Kalamazoo County you might not hear from the health department right away. We ask everyone to take the immediate next steps to help stop the spread.

Start isolating yourself right away. Stay home except to get medical care. Stay away from everyone else in your household (stay in a separate room, use separate bathroom, if possible, etc.). Let your employer know you have COVID-19.

Notify your close contacts so they can start to quarantine themselves. Give them the Quarantine Instructions.

- Close contacts = those who were within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes total in a 24 hour period, when the person who tested positive was contagious.
- Contagious = starts 2 days before symptoms appear (or 2 days before positive test, if no symptoms), through the end of the isolation period.

You can resume normal activities when

- 10 days have passed since symptoms started (or test date if no symptoms),
- you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medications, and
- your symptoms have improved.

CLOSE CONTACTS: QUARANTINE INSTRUCTIONS

Start quarantining right away if you are told you are a close contact.

Stay home except to get medical care.

Limit interactions with others, even in your own home.

Close contacts of a positive case (<6 feet, 15+ minutes total) need to quarantine for 14 days from the date of their last contact to COVID+ person while they were considered contagious.

Monitor for symptoms. If you develop symptoms, get tested.

You cannot test your way out of quarantine. Because the incubation period of this virus is long, close contacts need to stay home 14 days from your last contact, even if you receive a negative test result.



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