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Contact: (269) 621-3143

Jeff Elliott, Health Officer, jeffe@vbcassdhd.org

Dr. Larry Wile, Medical Director, lwile@vbcassdhd.org

Danielle Persky, Deputy Health Officer, dpersky@vbcassdhd.org

**Van Buren/Cass District Health Department Maintains the Importance
of Precautionary Measures to Prevent COVID-19**

Despite legal uncertainty, stay the course on COVID-19 guidelines as cases continue to surge

Hartford, Mich. – Following the Michigan Supreme Court Ruling on Emergency Powers and the [Emergency Order under MCL 333.2253](#) issued by Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Director, Robert Gordon, the message from Van Buren/Cass District Health Department is clear: measures to prevent COVID-19 have not changed. We encourage our community to respect both the court’s decision, the Emergency Order and the advice of medical experts by continuing with important COVID-19 prevention measures.

Under MCL 333.2253, if the MDHHS director determines that control of an epidemic is necessary to protect the public health, the director by emergency order may prohibit the gathering of people for any purpose and may establish procedures to be followed during the epidemic to insure continuation of essential public health services and enforcement of health laws. Yesterday’s emergency order largely reinstates, under the department’s authority, three major aspects of prior emergency orders: 1) requirements to wear masks at indoor and outdoor gatherings; 2) limitations on the size of gatherings; and 3) limitations on certain establishments. The order is effective immediately and remains in effect through Friday, Oct. 30. Details can be reviewed [here](#).

Van Buren/Cass District Health Department will continue to work closely with MDHHS and other local health departments as we learn more in the coming days about the legal framework, emergency orders and navigate pathways forward focused on protecting the health and safety of our community. It is our fervent hope that our communities, businesses, and schools continue to abide by the prevention measures that were put in place – like wearing face masks, adhering to social distancing guidelines, disinfecting surfaces, washing hands, staying home when sick – and that community members honor the policies individual businesses, organizations and schools maintain.

In the past two weeks in Cass County, we have seen the highest and fastest rate of spread since the pandemic began, averaging a daily percent positivity rate of 7% (9 cases a day). In Van Buren County over the last two weeks the rate of spread has remained steady with little decrease, averaging a daily percent positivity rate of 3% (7 cases a day). We can attribute much of the spread to lack of personal prevention measures and community gatherings/events; while this reality can be frustrating, it also means it is within our collective abilities to control.

As public health professionals, community members, and – most importantly – humans, we deeply understand how tiring and difficult the pandemic and measures to prevent it continue to be. We have come so far to let down our guard now. Despite the toll coronavirus has taken on all of our lives, we must find the continued strength to control the spread as a community.

For more tips on how to protect yourself from COVID-19, visit www.vbcassdhd.org. For more information regarding Executive Orders, Emergency Orders and State of Michigan Coronavirus updates, visit www.michigan.gov/coronavirus.

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