



KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

In the Pursuit of Extraordinary Governance...

**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
March 16, 2020

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Essential Services Remaining Open at Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department

Kalamazoo County Government is following the State of Michigan's recommendation in preventing the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) to protect the overall public health of residents. Starting at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 16 all county facilities will be closed to the public until further notice except for departments conducting essential services such as the Health & Community Services Department (HCS). It is important that basic public health needs are met, even during this pandemic, to protect the health of all residents in Kalamazoo County.

Essential Services Remaining Open at HCS

- Area Agency on Aging Region IIIA
- Clinic: limited STD testing; immunizations; there will be no TB Tests including QFTs, titers or travel immunizations
- Environmental Health: Land, water, and wastewater; food safety; laboratory
- WIC (by appointment only)
- Veterans Service Office (by appointment only)

HCS will adjust hours to be Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. No evening clinics will be held on Thursdays. If you currently have a community worker at HCS, they will be available by telephone and email.

Process for COVID-19 Testing

When a person visits their provider and are concerned about COVID-19, they may be asked a series of questions to screen them for possible testing. If needed and depending upon laboratory criteria, they may be asked to give a sample to be submitted for testing. The results of this test may take up to five days to be returned. This is a rapidly evolving process, and testing protocols and availability will likely change in the future. Laboratories are required to notify HCS of any positive results of a Kalamazoo County resident.

Explanation of Executive Order 2020-9

For questions within Kalamazoo County, facility owners may call HCS Environmental Health Division staff at 269-373-5210.

Governor Whitmer signed Executive Order 2020-9, which temporarily closes theaters, bars, and casinos, and limits restaurants to carry-out and delivery orders. Under Executive Order 2020-9, effective Monday, March 16

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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at 3:00pm, the following places of public accommodation will be closed; restaurants, cafes, coffee houses, bars, taverns, brewpubs, distilleries, clubs, movie theaters, indoor and outdoor performance venues, gymnasiums, fitness centers, recreation centers, indoor sports facilities, indoor exercise facilities, exercise studios, spas, and casinos. This order does not restrict a place of business from offering food and beverage using delivery service, window service, walk-up service, drive-through service, or drive-up service. Restaurants may allow **five (5)** people inside at a time to pick up orders, so long as they stay **six feet apart** from each other. These restrictions do not apply to the following locations: office buildings, grocery stores, markets, food pantries, pharmacies, drug stores, and providers of medical equipment and supplies, health care facilities, residential care facilities, congregate care facilities, juvenile justice facilities, warehouse and distribution centers, and industrial and manufacturing facilities. Order restrictions will remain in place until Monday, March 30 at 11:59 pm.

Questions

For medical-related questions regarding COVID-19, the public or providers may call 269-373-5267, Sunday through Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. MDHHS has activated a hotline for community questions as well. Their hours are Sunday through Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at 888-535-6136.

For questions regarding the Governor's Executive Order 2020-9, owners may call 269-373-5210.

For community-related questions about available social service resources or volunteering call 2-1-1.

Prevention

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. [[English](#). [Chinese](#). [Spanish](#).]

Older adults over the age of 60 and people with chronic medical conditions have an [increased risk for serious illness from COVID-19](#). If you are at a higher risk of getting sick from COVID-19, you should take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others. When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often. The CDC is recommending for higher risk individuals to avoid crowds, visiting long-term care facilities, cruise travel and non-essential air travel as much as possible

All individuals should take the following necessary precautions:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recommendations for using a facemask.
 - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
 - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for [health workers](#) and [people who are taking care of someone in close settings](#) (at home or in a health care facility).

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

Patients with confirmed infection have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19, call your health care provider. If you do not have a health care provider, call the nearest hospital.

REMEMBER: [Discrimination harms public health](#). People of Asian descent, including Chinese Americans, are not more likely to get coronavirus than anyone else. Always [share accurate information](#) about a virus and how it spreads. It is important to remember that stigma and discrimination occur when people associate an infectious disease, such as COVID-19, with a population or nationality. COVID-19 does not target people from specific populations, ethnicities or racial background. Suspected discrimination can be [reported](#) to the Michigan Department of Civil Rights.

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Kalamazoo County Government
Health & Community Services Department

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