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News Release

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Immediate Release

Dickinson-Iron District Health Department streamlines approach to Contact Tracing

Kingsford and Iron River, Michigan – November 13, 2020. Dickinson-Iron District Health Department is notifying residents in Dickinson and Iron counties that cases within the two-county jurisdiction have increased significantly over the last three weeks. Recent cases have reported numerous contacts making contact tracing efforts difficult to sustain.

Effective immediately, DIDHD has made the decision, based on the overwhelming number of cases, to prioritize our efforts on containing potential outbreaks by continuing case investigation and contact tracing in nursing homes, hospitals, and schools as well as clusters identified in high risk congregate settings. DIDHD is now utilizing the Michigan Health Alert Network to notify the public of COVID-19 positive results and exposures. This alert is a generated telephone call that will come from the phone number 1-866-998-3678. We recommend programming this number into your cellphone so you will know it is a message from the local health department. The alert will contain information such as; a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, a possible COVID-19 exposure within the community or local schools, and quarantine period duration. The alert will never contain personal health information about individuals.

The alert is programmed to continue calling your telephone every 10 minutes until you answer the call. It is very important that you listen to the entire message. At the end of the message

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please use your telephone keypad to acknowledge receipt of the message. Depending on the situation there will be different responses. These responses will let us know whether you understand the information and do not require follow-up or if you have questions and you would like to be contacted by a DIDHD employee. It is crucial that you select a response. This alert software will save considerable staff time and allow us to distribute information to the public with less delay. We appreciate your patience with this process.

It is crucial for the public to follow the below guidelines to contain the spread of COVID-19:

Individuals notified that they are positive or probable COVID-19 should do the following:

- Isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms or 10 days from the day a positive test sample was collected if you don't have symptoms. After 10 days, if your symptoms have improved (note symptoms do not need to be fully resolved, but overall improvement is required), **and** you are fever-free without the use of medications, it is OK to return to normal activities. If you are still feeling sick, please consult with a medical professional as some people can be contagious for a longer period.
- Please do your best to isolate away from the other members in your household to prevent them from contracting the virus.
- Notify your employer or school that you are a COVID-19 case.
- Notify all of your close contacts and ask that they quarantine for 14 days: a close contact includes those that you have been within 6 ft. of for more than a total of 15 minutes any day you were contagious which is two days before symptoms begin or 2 days prior to a positive test if you are asymptomatic.

If you are a Close Contact you should do the following:

- Quarantine for 14 days from your last contact to the COVID-19 case. If you develop symptoms you should get tested and isolate away from other household members.
- Please notify your employer or school that you are a close contact and need to quarantine.
- If you are a close contact and considered an essential worker, please work with your employer to determine your return to work procedure.
- Please note receiving a negative COVID-19 test as a close contact does not mean that you will not symptoms or test positive at a future time within your quarantine period. You

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need to complete the full 14-day quarantine period even if you do not develop symptoms.

- If you are a household contact and you have been unable to isolate you should start your 14-day quarantine from the last day of close contact with the positive person during their infectious period (A person who has tested positive for COVID-19 is considered contagious for 10 days).

We will no longer be issuing letters to employers. Due to the inability to complete investigations and identify close contacts, we will no longer have record of all close contacts.

For more information on COVID-19 and to locate a testing center near you, please visit didhd.org, michigan.gov/coronavirus, or cdc.gov.

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