



## Joint News Release

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For Immediate Release

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(Berrien County, Michigan) -- As the response to COVID-19 continues to grow in Berrien County, the Berrien County Health Department and Spectrum Health Lakeland are furthering their partnership in conducting contact tracing and monitoring for positive COVID-19 individuals and their contacts. Spectrum Health Lakeland nurses are joining forces with Berrien County Health Department public health nurses to increase the capacity and effectiveness of contact tracing efforts.

During events like this current COVID-19 pandemic, contact tracing helps make possible earlier diagnosis and getting care to people who need it. The information can also help contain clusters of illness within a particular family or community group. If a contact of a COVID-19 positive case develops symptoms, the early identification can ensure that they are isolated at home and not spreading the virus to anyone else. This strategy helps reduce the number of cases, limits illness transmission, and ultimately, will help save the lives of those most vulnerable to this virus.

“We are ramping up to soon be making several hundred calls in the coming days to get a better sense of a particular person’s contact history and what risks may be present for them,” says Nicki Britten, health officer, Berrien County Health Department. “This process allows our team to provide information to each contact about the importance of self-quarantining and monitoring to see if they develop symptoms of COVID-19 based on their exposure.” The Berrien County Health Department will also continue with its response efforts to COVID-19 by performing surveillance of the virus throughout the County, and providing situational updates and guidance to the public, media, and community partners.

In response to the outpouring of community inquiries and offers of support, Spectrum Health Lakeland has established a drop-off donation site at Lakeland at Meadowbrook, located at 2550 Meadowbrook Road in Benton Harbor. Donations will be accepted from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Traveling to drop-off sites to donate medical supplies does not violate Michigan’s statewide stay-at-home order, which allows for an exception to the order for providing necessities to “individuals who need assistance as a result of this emergency.” At this time Spectrum Health Lakeland is not currently accepting donations of hand sewn masks, other medical equipment, medications, or blankets.

To reduce the risk of exposure for all, we ask donors to call 269.927.5361 when they arrive at the drop-off site for further instructions. More information and a list of items being accepted can be found at [spectrumhealthlakeland.org/covid19](http://spectrumhealthlakeland.org/covid19).

Furthermore, in response to the number of questions received regarding the Executive Order put in place yesterday by Governor Whitmer, it is recommended that residents reference the Michigan.gov/Coronavirus website that provides a Frequently Asked Questions document providing further guidance to interpret the Executive Orders. The website is found at:  
[https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178\\_98455-521682--,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178_98455-521682--,00.html)

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) has developed a helpful guide for the Michigan food and agriculture sector in helping them identify who is deemed essential. MDARD has established an email address for industry, stakeholders, and consumers to submit questions and/or get clarification on specific areas of concern at [MDARD-COVID19@michigan.gov](mailto:MDARD-COVID19@michigan.gov).

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