

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Christina Harrington, MPH
TITLE: Health Officer
PHONE: (989) 758-3813
EMAIL: charrington@saginawcounty.com

COVID-19 CASE INVESTIGATION CHANGES UNDERWAY

(Saginaw) – The Saginaw County Health Department announces that, effective today, procedures for case investigations are changing. This comes as cases are exploding in the county (nearly 1,200 in 14 days with another 368 over the weekend) and health department staff – even working at full capacity – are unable to investigate all positive cases and notify close contacts quickly.

“If you test positive for COVID-19, you may not get a phone call from the health department anymore,” explains Chris Harrington, MPH, health officer. “We are handling anywhere between 70 to 170 new cases each day – compared with 7 cases per day over the summer. That’s why we need everyone’s help to follow isolation and quarantine precautions and to begin using an online self-reporting form.”

The new self-reporting form is available at www.saginawpublichealth.org. The information provided on the form gives the health department what it needs to complete each case in the Michigan Disease Surveillance System. Up until now, that information was gathered over the phone. Filling out the online form versus having a lengthy phone call from investigators will be simpler and easier for both the public and health department staff, Harrington explains. Filling out the form is **REQUIRED** for those who want or need an isolation or quarantine letter for their employer.

Here is what the health department is asking Saginaw County residents to do:

- As soon as you or a loved one tests positive, start isolation immediately for at least 10 days.
- Notify your close contacts and encourage them to start quarantine for a full 14 day and watch for symptoms.
- Go to www.saginawpublichealth.org and fill out the individual self-reporting form. This is required if you need a letter for your employer.
- Please follow all instructions to help curb the spread to others.
- If you have questions about isolation or quarantine, call the health department hotline at (989) 758-3828

This new procedure for case investigations and contact tracing will also help the health department prioritize investigations on outbreaks in schools, businesses, and in vulnerable populations. Therefore, it is **REQUIRED** that businesses and schools continue to use the online reporting forms already established for them. This will trigger an investigation if an outbreak is occurring, along with support from the health department on cleaning, sanitizing and other mitigation strategies.

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