



## GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

COMMUNITY HEALTH  
2600 LaFranier Road, Suite A  
Traverse City, MI 49686  
231-995-6111

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH  
2650 LaFranier Road  
Traverse City, MI 49686  
231-995-6051

ADMINISTRATION &  
MEDICAL EXAMINER  
2600 LaFranier Road, Suite A  
Traverse City, MI 49686  
231-995-6100

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT &  
PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS  
2600 LaFranier Road, Suite A  
Traverse City, MI 49686  
231-995-6100

[www.gtchd.org](http://www.gtchd.org)

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### For Immediate Release

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#### Grand Traverse County Health Department Advises Residents to Prepare, not Panic for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

The Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD) is continuously working on preparedness and response planning for COVID-19 both locally and with other local Health Departments across Northern Michigan – this includes the Benzie-Leelanau Health Department, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW), District Health Department #10, District Health Department #4, District Health Department #2, and Central Michigan District Health Department. In addition, communication occurs daily with federal, state and local officials/partners. GTCHD is monitoring the situation at a local level. Michigan, including Grand Traverse County has no confirmed cases at this time.

As COVID-19 cases increase worldwide, including in the United States, it is important to be mindful of preparing for a shift from an epidemic to a pandemic. We find ourselves in a unique situation of being able to advise our community before the event happens, allowing us to **PREPARE, NOT PANIC**. It is still uncertain when it will impact the United States, for how long, or the severity, and information is rapidly changing on a daily basis. Taking action early can help protect your health and those you care about.

These measures will help decrease and slow the spread of infection, and reduce the impact on our community:

- Pay attention, and comply, with public health requests and recommendations – see local health department websites for the most current information.
- Get your information from credible sources (CDC, MDHHS, GTCHD, etc.).
- Practice good hand hygiene; wash hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use alcohol based hand sanitizer (60% or more) if soap and water is not available.
- Stay home when you are sick (work, school, social gatherings, events, etc.).
- Clean all “high touch” surfaces everyday with household cleaning spray or wipes.
- Cover coughs, sneezes; avoid touching your face.
- Avoid sharing personal household items.
- Be current on your routine vaccinations.
- Call ahead to your Healthcare Provider if you have a serious respiratory illness (most COVID-19 infections will not be serious).

- Plan now for caring for loved ones who may be sick or medically compromised; and how not to expose each other.
- For those over 65 or those who have chronic medical conditions (congestive heart failure, asthma or diabetes), keep prescription medications filled and over the counter medications on hand.
- Maintain a good supply of non-perishable food items, including pet food, in the event that you become ill and need to remain home.
- Plan ahead in the event that daycare or schools were to become closed.
- Talk to your employer on contingency plans for absenteeism, working from home, or other strategies for the continuation of operations.

Wendy Hirschenberger, Health Officer for GTCHD explained, “in the absence of a vaccine or medicine to treat COVID-19, our best defense is taking preventative actions like handwashing, staying home if you are sick, avoiding others who are sick, and preparing your family and household, if social distancing is needed to contain the spread of the disease.”

Visit [www.gtchd.com](http://www.gtchd.com) for more information or follow us on social media @GTCHHealthDept

For additional information about COVID-19 precautions for households, please visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/index.html>

For information about COVID-19 precautions for schools and daycare centers, please visit

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-for-schools.html>.

For information about COVID-19 precautions for businesses, please visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html>.

For additional general information about the coronavirus, please visit:

<http://www.gtchd.org/2231/COVID-19-Novel-Coronavirus>

<https://www.michigan.gov/coronoavirus>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

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Media Contact:

Rose Ann M. Davis, [rdavis@gtchd.org](mailto:rdavis@gtchd.org), 231-995-6104