



KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

In the Pursuit of Extraordinary Governance...

MEMORANDUM

TO: Western Michigan University Community
FROM: Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department
DATE: September 21, 2020
RE: Situational Update of COVID-19

At the Health & Community Services Department, we are closely monitoring the COVID-19 data for all of Kalamazoo County. We work closely with WMU and have regularly scheduled meetings to evaluate their specific data and trends. We use numerous data points to make public health recommendations to WMU. Based on this date, we are seeing evidence of increasing disease transmission among WMU students. This is not surprising as the campus restarts, as there is still community-wide disease transmission in our county.

We anticipated an increase in positive cases when WMU returned to campus just like we anticipated and experienced an increase in positive cases when the Stay at Home order was lifted. The majority of the positive cases are coming from off-campus living situations and off-campus social gatherings. That is consistent with what we see, for example, with businesses where a very controlled environment exists while in the workplace. There is a similar trend that exists with the general population and those testing positive. People are not necessarily being exposed while at work or school, as there are strict public health risk mitigation strategies there. The exposure is happening in the social gatherings outside of work or school where people are not as strict with following the public health recommendations.

WMU has strong disease mitigation strategies in place for on-campus activities. They are monitoring their data and responding as needed. But limiting transmission requires consistent vigilance at all times. Therefore, as the community starts to re-engage, it is even more critical that we take ownership as individuals. As individuals, we must adhere to the public health recommendations of staying home if sick or exhibiting symptoms, wearing a face covering or mask, maintaining six feet from others and socially distance, and washing hands frequently. It will be up to us as individuals to hold that responsibility and accountability and not just the institutions that employ or provide education to us.

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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