



# DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT NO. 2

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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### COVID-19 Wastewater Surveillance Data Shared with District Health Department No. 2

Recently, researchers from Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) notified District Health Department No. 2 (DHD2), that routine sampling showed elevated levels of the virus that causes COVID-19 were detected in wastewater originating from the Tawas area. Multiple locations in the area are tested including health care facilities, long-term care facilities and local schools; increased levels of COVID-19 were detected at health care facilities and Tawas Area Schools. This is not to be unexpected considering the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) categorizes Iosco County as having high transmission levels of COVID-19. Wastewater surveillance data can provide information on the presence of infected individuals contributing to a wastewater system and the infection trends within a community contributing to a wastewater treatment plant. When higher levels of COVID-19 are detected in the wastewater, it means individuals are shedding the virus which may indicate a higher level of infection in the community.

The testing of water in all forms has been a long-standing public health tool to help determine the presence of bacteria or disease and can provide insight into what mitigation strategies may be necessary to protect public health. For example, the purpose of lake water testing can result in a do not swim advisory of public beaches due to high E-coli levels. In this case, the detection of COVID-19 virus in wastewater results in strategic testing of the community to further determine the extent of viral prevalence.

District Health Department No. 2 will be working closely with community partners to monitor the situation. In July Iosco County had a total of 23 COVID-19 cases reported; however, for August Iosco County experienced a significant increase to 153 cases. Detections in wastewater, in combination with this increase in cases warrants further investigation. It is critical everyone continue to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 and seek testing if you experience symptoms or you are concerned you may have been exposed to a person with COVID-19. District Health Department No. 2 is coordinating with Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to create pop-up COVID-19 testing events in Iosco County. Please check the link below for information on the COVID-19 testing events. <https://www.dhd2.org/press-releases>

District Health Department No. 2 is reminding residents of the following steps they can take to help prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Get vaccinated if you are able; to find a location visit [www.dhd2.org/covid-19](http://www.dhd2.org/covid-19) or [www.vaccines.gov](http://www.vaccines.gov)

- Wear a mask when in indoors and at crowded outdoor settings
- Wash your hands and use hand sanitizer
- Maintain social distancing whenever possible
- Stay home if you are sick
- Get tested for COVID-19 if you are showing symptoms. To find a testing location visit: <https://www.solvehealth.com/search?cobrandedSrpLocation=MI>.

A COVID-19 testing event will be held at the Tawas United Methodist Church located at 20 E. M-55 in Tawas City on Monday, September 6, 2021, from 12:00 pm to 8:00 p.m.

A COVID-19 vaccination clinic will be held on Thursday, September 9, 2021, at the Tawas United Methodist Church from 10:00 am to 3:30 pm. The clinic is open to anyone 12 years of age and older. Those under 18 will need a parent/guardian. Please bring your insurance card and your ID with you to the clinic.

More information on wastewater surveillance can be found on the CDC's National Wastewater Surveillance System website at <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/surveillance/wastewater-surveillance/wastewater-surveillance.html>.