



KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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NEWS RELEASE
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Focus on Resident, Employee Safety After Identifying COVID-19 Positive Cases in Vulnerable Population Facilities in Kalamazoo County

Kalamazoo, MI – The Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department is working closely with two vulnerable population facilities, Kalamazoo Gospel Mission and Medilodge of Kalamazoo, who have individuals who tested positive for COVID-19.

Kalamazoo Gospel Mission

One resident has tested positive for COVID-19 and is being isolated at a separate facility. Four additional residents were exposed to this individual, and they are being quarantined and monitored at this time. The Health & Community Services Department has completed contact tracing and all residents and employees with potential exposure have been notified.

The Kalamazoo Gospel Mission has been working closely with the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department in preparation of a potential positive case at their facility. They have been following all recommended strategies to protect their residents and employees from COVID-19 including:

- Screening all residents and employees for symptoms daily utilizing infrared thermometers provided by the health department
- Ensuring adequate supply and use of personal protective equipment such as gloves and home-sewn cloth masks
- Enhancing hand hygiene practices and cleaning and disinfection practices at the facilities
- Limiting use of communal spaces and cancellation of any group activities
- Accessing 24/7 medical support from the health department's disease surveillance RN staff

The following is a statement provided by Pastor Michael Brown from the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission:

"It's a blessing that we have gone without any positives for the past almost 40 days into this pandemic. I am encouraged but the quick response of the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department, and the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission staff, to move the affected individual into quarantine. This will help to ensure the health and safety of our staff and guests."

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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Medilodge of Kalamazoo

The 17 residents who have tested positive for COVID-19 are being isolated in their rooms within a specific unit of the facility. All group activities have been canceled. The three (3) employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 are isolating at home and are no longer in contact with any of the residents. Currently all residents and family members are in the process of being notified of the positive cases and steps are being taken to limit further spread of the virus.

The following is a statement provided by Medilodge of Kalamazoo:

“Medilodge of Kalamazoo, like many long-term care providers throughout the nation, is battling the COVID-19 pandemic and caring for positively tested residents. In serving the needs of our community, we prepared in advance for the outbreak knowing that we would need to assist our local hospitals in accepting COVID-19 patients in the recovery cycle of the disease process. We are following all of the CDC and CMS guidelines, maintaining regular communication with the Health Department and in conjunction with the Governor’s office, Medilodge of Kalamazoo has been selected, based on having the necessary supplies, personal protective equipment, and amazing staff, to assist with the hospital discharges of COVID- 19 positive residents for their treatment and care. We are extremely proud of our professional and dedicated staff that steps up to meet this challenge head on. Due to the state ordered restrictions on visitors which is so frustrating for our residents and their families, we have employed Facility Support Advocates dedicated to providing support to residents, which includes assisting with video chats with their families, and anything we can do help them. While we cannot get into specific details due to strict confidentiality laws, we are happy to soon be discharging some of our residents who have fully recovered from COVID-19.”

The Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department continues to provide personal protective equipment supplementary support, staff education, and infection prevention technical assistance to all community partners and long-term care facilities and nursing homes, including Kalamazoo Gospel Mission and Medilodge of Kalamazoo. Continued support for these facilities will ensure that these high-risk settings have what they need to adequately prevent and mitigate any potential clusters of COVID-19, as well as other illness.

To date, there have been 180 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Kalamazoo County and nine deaths due to the virus. HCS continues to perform contact tracing for all identified COVID-19 positive individuals in Kalamazoo County.

Information about the COVID-19 is rapidly changing. For general questions about COVID-19, call the state hotline at 1-888-535-6136. The state hotline is open seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. People may also call the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department COVID-19 Call Center at 269-373-5200 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html, www.michigan.gov/coronavirus, and www.kalcounty.com/hcs/covid19.php.

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