

NEWS RELEASE

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Saginaw County Health Department Explains Positivity Rate

(SAGINAW) – With the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) announcing a 12-day extension of our “pause to save lives,” they are also pointing to three specific metrics they will be watching to determine next steps. One of those metrics is our state’s COVID-19 positivity rate.

Positivity rate literally means the percentage of all coronavirus tests performed that come back positive, or $(\text{positive tests})/(\text{total tests}) \times 100\%$. It’s an important number because it helps us determine the level of transmission or degree of “spread” of COVID-19 in our state.

An ideal resource to learn more about our positivity rate in real time is mistartmap.info. Locally, in Saginaw County, we use this site regularly to track our positivity rate. Back in October, our 7-day average positivity rate was around 3.5%. We were as high as 16.9% in mid-November, declined a bit to 13.7% on December 1, but then jumped up to 18.9% by December 4.

“Testing has been such an important tool in our fight against COVID-19,” says Chris Harrington, MPH, health officer. “Individuals and their healthcare providers use it to treat the illness appropriately and to determine the need to isolate from others for at least 10 days. The Saginaw County Health Department relies on testing to track the ‘state of the pandemic,’ to help us provide guidance to businesses and schools, and to help us determine if our community is doing enough testing for the amount of people who are getting infected.”

She adds, MDHHS is now using it to guide its policy decisions about statewide restrictions designed to reduce transmission.

Be sure to tune into our weekly FB Live events every Wednesday at 10am where we consistently analyze Saginaw County’s positivity rate, along with the other two metrics MDHHS will be tracking in the extended “pause to save lives.”

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