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## MEDIA RELEASE

Information     **Advisory**     Warning     Update

**DATE: AUGUST 20, 2021**

**TIME: 3:15pm**

### **MEDIA CONTACT:**

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### ***St. Clair County Health Department Issues County Public Health Order Establishing Procedures for the Quarantine of Persons Identified as COVID-19 Close Contacts***

Dr. Annette Mercatante, Medical Health Officer of the St. Clair County Health Department, issued a Public Health Order addressing COVID-19 quarantine measures. This Order **reaffirms** the existing Michigan Public Health Code as outlined in MCL 333.2453 (1).

The Order details the requirements for any individual who resides, attends school or is employed within St. Clair County that is notified by the St. Clair County Health Department (SCCHD), Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), a local school district, or an agent thereof, that they are a COVID-19 close contact, is ordered to quarantine for ten (10) days, or such other duration as may be required in a written public notice issued by the St. Clair County Health Department. The Order is effective August 20, 2021 and remains in effect until further Order of the Medical Health Officer.

The Public Health Order, based upon the most recent facts about the virus, is intended to protect vulnerable individuals and people who are not yet vaccinated, reduce transmission of COVID-19 in schools, workplaces, etc.

Highlights of the Order include:

- Upon request, confirmed and probable cases, businesses, schools, and other facilities must provide the names and phone numbers of individuals with possible COVID-19 exposure to MDHHS and local health departments to aid in contact tracing and case investigation efforts.

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- This order does not apply to individuals who are fully vaccinated, as defined by the CDC Guidelines, or who have had documented COVID-19 in the last 90 days and are currently asymptomatic.
- An employer, school, or other organization that requires or permits a close contact to act contrary to this Order is also in violation of this Order and subject to the penalties prescribed by the Michigan Public Health Code.
- A person or organization who violates an order of a local health officer is guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to serious civil and/or criminal penalties per MCL 333.2443.

“Quarantine of a healthy individual who is identified as a close contact is necessary to control community transmission of COVID-19”, stated Dr. Annette Mercatante, Medical Health Officer. “We understand how difficult the last 18 months have been on everyone, however it is our duty to protect the health of our community and work to control the spread of this virus.”

The St. Clair County Health Department continues to monitor the situation and will respond accordingly to best protect our community.

Updates are available on the health department website [www.scchealth.co](http://www.scchealth.co) and on social media @scchdmi.

**#END#**

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
ST. CLAIR COUNTY  
ST. CLAIR COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

In the Matter of:

PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER  
PURSUANT TO MCL 333.2453  
ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES FOR THE QUARANTINE  
OF PERSONS IDENTIFIED AS COVID-19 CLOSE CONTACTS

Matters of concern to the health of St. Clair County citizens having been brought to the attention of the Medical Health Officer of the St. Clair County Public Health Department, and the Medical Health Officer having made the following determinations, issues this Order pursuant to the Michigan Public Health Code, MCL §333.2453 (1), to establish procedures to be followed by, and restrict the public gathering of, healthy persons identified as close contacts of a known or probable case of COVID-19:

DETERMINATIONS

1. MCL 333.2453 (1) gives a local health officer the authority to issue emergency orders necessary to control an epidemic and insure the continuation of essential public health services and the enforcement of health laws; including orders to establish “. . . procedures to be followed by persons . . .” and to prohibit “. . . the gathering of people for any purpose.”
2. Limiting community transmission of the infectious agent that causes the COVID-19 disease is a significant factor in the control of the current epidemic and is necessary to protect the public health of the citizens of St. Clair County.
3. Quarantine of healthy persons who are a close contact, is necessary to control the community transmission of COVID-19.
4. The St. Clair County Department of Public Health determines that a person is a close contact based upon the guidelines issued by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as applied to the local conditions of the COVID-19 epidemic in St. Clair County, at the time of the contact.
5. Controlling community transmission has a demonstrated positive impact on the course of the COVID-19 epidemic, and reduces the strain on hospitals, emergency medical services, ambulance and patient transport service, and other essential public health services.
6. An increasing degree of public pressure has been directed at schools, employers and other organizations to ignore the significant public health benefit of quarantine and permit active participation of close contacts in school, sports, the workplace and other public events, despite the increased risk such conduct poses to specific populations or community transmission of COVID-19 during the current epidemic in St. Clair County.
7. If failure to quarantine becomes widespread the control of community transmission will become a more significant public health problem.
8. Quarantine by Health Officer Order will assure employees that they can use the non-retaliation provisions of the COVID-19 Employment Rights Act; MCL 419.401, et seq.

9. Schools, employers, and other organizations have asked the St. Clair County Public Health Department for guidance concerning the quarantine of close contacts.

10. COVID-19 is unique as a communicable disease in that every person that eventually becomes infected with COVID-19 is able to transmit the disease to others for at least a 48 hour period before they become symptomatic, or otherwise have any reason to know that they can make other people sick; and, at least 20% (and in some populations as many as 40%) of all know positive cases will never become symptomatic, yet they are fully able to transmit the disease and make other people sick.

11. In St. Clair County, in the past 2 months, 22.4% of all confirmed positive COVID-19 cases were first identified as a close contact of another probable or confirmed positive case, before they became positive themselves.

12. Since March 16, 2020, St. Clair County has experienced 18,876 laboratory confirmed positive cases of COVID-19. As of August 16, 2021, St. Clair County has a 7-day test positivity rate of 5.3%, and a 7-day new case per 100,000 count of 78.5. These statistics indicate both epidemic level contagion and substantial community transmission

13. Because a close contact is able to infect others with COVID-19 before they, or the St. Clair County Public Health Department, have a reasonable basis to believe that they harbor the specific infectious agent that causes COVID-19 certain procedures are required, including the quarantine of healthy persons who have been close contacts of probable or known positive COVID-19 cases.

14. These procedures, and restrictions on public gatherings of close contacts are necessary to maintain the public health of the citizens of St. Clair County, and control the COVID-19 epidemic.

Based on the preceding determinations IT IS ORDERED, by the authority provided in MCL 333.2453 (1):

- A. Any individual who resides, attends school or is employed within St. Clair County that is notified by the St. Clair County Public Health Department, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, a local school district, or an agent thereof, that they are a COVID-19 close contact, is ordered to quarantine for ten (10) days, or such other duration as may be required in a written public notice issued by the St. Clair County Public Health Department.
- B. Upon request, confirmed and probable cases, businesses, schools, and other facilities must provide the names and phone numbers of individuals with possible COVID-19 exposure to MDHHS and local health departments to aid in contact tracing and case investigation efforts.
- C. The quarantine must occur at the person's home, or at such other location, that will permit them to refrain from public contact or gatherings, whether indoors or outdoors.
- D. The quarantine shall occur in the manner recommended by the CDC Guidelines and approved by the medical health officer, at the time the contact occurred.

- E. This order does not apply to individuals who are fully vaccinated, as defined by the CDC Guidelines, or who have had documented COVID-19 in the last 90 days, have not developed new symptoms, and are currently asymptomatic.
- F. An employer, school, or other organization that requires or permits a close contact to act contrary to this Order is also in violation of this Order and subject to the penalties prescribed by the Michigan Public Health Code.
- G. A person or organization who violates an order of a local health officer is guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to serious civil and/or criminal penalties per MCL 333.2443.
- H. Administrative relief from this Order may be granted in appropriate circumstances. A person aggrieved of this Order must first notify the St. Clair County Corporation Counsel of all the reasons that this order should not apply to them. Within two-business day following said notice, the St. Clair County Health Officer or his designee will issue a written response affirming, revoking, or modifying this Order as it applies to that specific person. After this response, if that person is still aggrieved of the order, that person may seek judicial review under MCL 333.2462 (2).
- I. This order is effective immediately upon signature, and remains in effect until further Order of the Health Officer.

IT IS SO ORDERED



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Annette Mercatante, M.D., M.P.H.  
Medical Health Officer  
St. Clair County Public Health Department

Date and Time Signed: August 20, 2021 3:15 pm