



Joint News Release

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Berrien County Departments Collaborate on Reopening Guidance for Workplaces

Berrien County, Mich. – The Berrien County Health Department, Department of Economic Development, and Berrien County Emergency Operations Center contributed to the recent launch of a new website and resource providing guidance for businesses to consider as they plan for reopening their companies as Executive Orders allow. The entire plan, links, and resources can be viewed at www.BerrienReopens.org.

The group consisted of additional leaders from Kinexus Group, Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber of Commerce, and Cornerstone Alliance. Together, they have developed a framework of best practices and guidance to help companies not only get started but build confidence in employees and customers to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The framework has several components including having a Preparedness and Success Plan, having a workplace coordinator, clear responsibilities for supervisors and employees, and having workplace preventative measures to ensure health and safety of workers, customers, and the public.

“We want to encourage our businesses and workplaces to reopen in manner that maintains the health and safety of our community,” said Berrien County Health Department Health Officer, Nicki Britten. “We continue to monitor data and will be able to identify if we need to adjust course. We believe consistent adherence to the health practices outlined in the plan will provide the best chance of maintaining the flattening of the curve that we’ve seen so far.”

“It is important to look at giving our community some sound advice on how reopening safely might look, early, so they can prepare themselves for when the time for reopening is appropriate,” said Mac Elliott, Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners. “We followed our Emergency Operations Plan here in the Emergency Operations Center and I am proud of the team we put together to work on recovery.”

“This plan is comprehensive and designed for all size companies to utilize and share with their workers and the public,” said Dan Fette, Berrien County’s Community Development Director. “It’s a blueprint that has the latest information, but also flexible enough to be changed to meet the shifting information that surrounds this crisis.”

Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer has extended the “Stay Home, Stay Safe” Executive Order until May 28th, 2020, while allowing additional sectors to resume operating, including construction, real estate, and manufacturing in addition to the already designated “critical infrastructure workforce” that has been permitted to operate. The Berrien ReOpens partnership will be providing regular updates as information and conditions change. Find more information on COVID-19, including data and resources for specific audiences at www.bchdmi.org.