



## Washtenaw County Health Department

### For Immediate Release

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### **Washtenaw County Health Department Provides Data on Probable COVID-19 Cases**

Probable cases are directly linked to confirmed cases, but not tested

YPSILANTI, Mich., April 24, 2020 - Washtenaw County Health Department is now providing additional data on “probable” cases of COVID-19. Probable cases are generally defined as cases that have been directly linked to a confirmed case, have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, but were not tested. Reporting will begin with today’s daily update at approximately 3:00 p.m.

“Testing remains a challenge,” says Jimena Loveluck, MSW, Washtenaw County Health Officer. “We know confirmed cases can’t yet give us a complete picture of what’s happening locally, and we’re doing everything we can to understand the impact of COVID-19 more fully in Washtenaw County.”

[Probable cases](#) are reported in conjunction with confirmed cases. They can provide a more complete picture of illness locally than confirmed cases alone. Washtenaw County Health Department has been tracking probable cases since March 21 and defined them as an individual with known, close contact with a confirmed case who then developed symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Close contact means an individual was less than 6 feet away for more than 10 minutes, and neither person was wearing a face covering. Most close contacts are members of the same household.

### **Contact Tracing**

Washtenaw County Health Department identifies probable cases through ongoing contact tracing. We contact each individual with confirmed COVID-19, interview them, and document where they have been and who was in close contact with them. Those in close contact with a confirmed case are considered high risk and contacted directly. Throughout this process, the Health Department works to provide needed support to individuals and families instructed to isolate or quarantine.

### **Testing Challenges**

COVID-19 testing is still limited, and currently testing is not capturing milder cases of illness in our community. Testing also remains unavailable to individuals that do not fit the [priorities](#) defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Testing criteria in Michigan now includes individuals with mild symptoms and essential workers still reporting to work in person, with or without symptoms, when resources and capacity allow. But local health care providers continue to report shortages of the supplies needed to complete tests.

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## **Prevention**

It remains critically important for people to follow social distancing guidelines, wear a [cloth face covering](#) when in public, only leave their home for essential reasons, and wash their hands frequently. This will allow us to continue to minimize the number of people who get sick.

## **Updates**

Please continue to rely on official sources of information for local ([www.washtenaw.org/covid19](http://www.washtenaw.org/covid19)), state ([www.michigan.gov/coronavirus](http://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus)), and national (<http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19>) updates.

Health Department staff are available to address urgent questions by phone or email: 734-544-6700 or [l-wchdcontact@washtenaw.org](mailto:l-wchdcontact@washtenaw.org). If you call, please leave a message. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services also operates a COVID-19 hotline 888-535-6136 daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## **Resources**

- [COVID-19 Cases in Washtenaw County](#) from Washtenaw County Health Department
- [Understanding the Data](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- [Michigan Coronavirus Data](#) from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
- [Multilingual Materials](#) from Washtenaw County Health Department and others
- [Food and Other Essential Services](#) from Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development and partners

## **Washtenaw County Health Department**

The Washtenaw County Health Department promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community. Our mission is to assure, in partnership with the community, the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives through prevention and protection programs.

The Washtenaw County Health Department has achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board and maintains state accreditation through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Visit us at [washtenaw.org/health](http://washtenaw.org/health) or call 734-544-6700.

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