

BDL has been approached by the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency to see if we would like to be a partner for them to distribute take-home COVID-19 test kits. I seek the Board's input on this question.

With Federal subsidies ended for providing free at-home tests, the Community Health Agency plans to continue to support to our community by offering these free kits, both at their offices and via community partners, like libraries. We have been told all that would be required of the library would be to store the kits, distribute them to those who ask for them, and request more as needed from the Community Health Agency. I have asked for more information about how many we would be storing and how long this program is expected to last, and I hope to have those answers for you by our Monday meeting.

Opinions among library staff vary on the topic of whether we should do this. During the worst part of the pandemic, you may recall that the library declined to participate in the State of Michigan's program to distribute at-home test kits, mostly out of a desire to minimize exposure to our staff, who are trained for library services and not infectious disease care. Though the pandemic has lessened, concern for staff well being certainly remains. Most of our front-line staff are part time, and therefore don't qualify for the library health insurance plan. Additionally, the BDL Temporary COVID Leave Policy has lapsed, so exposing staff to additional risk could result in some running out of leave time before the year is up.

On the other hand, the library has service point located conveniently around the county, with somewhat longer hours of operation than the Community Health Agency's offices, which close at 4pm M-F.

Would the Board like to make a recommendation on this request from the Community Health Agency?

Submitted by John Rucker