

In the past month, the Temporary COVID-19 Leave Policy has been used by one library staff member, while awaiting a thankfully negative test. That said, the current situation in our county and the larger world leaves me feeling extremely pessimistic about the library's chances of weathering the current surge unscathed. As many are saying in the medical field, we're probably all going to get this one. So we're doing what we can to prepare for closures or substitute workers at this point. Working ahead on projects. Making sure procedures are documented and supplies are in stock. I will not be surprised if we have to close some locations temporarily or reduce hours in the next month due to staffing shortages, similar to autumn 2020.

Due to our relatively low attendance right now, especially compared to, say a school or a grocery store, we do not plan on changing our strategy of strongly recommending a face covering and social distancing. Interestingly, more patrons are opting for curbside pickup this week.

I continue to believe that our employees are as safe as we can make them at the workplace in this current situation. Staff are all aware of the COVID-19 Temporary Leave Policy. We are continuing to abide by the CDC/MIOSHA/BHSJCHA recommendation to require employees to wear a mask when they are around others. To help keep staff as healthy as possible while on the job, the library has acquired a stock of KN95 masks to distribute to staff only on a controlled basis. You may recall that similarly, we provided cloth masks for staff at the beginning of the pandemic. We are planning to distribute these KN95 masks through February and reassess at that time whether or not there is a need to continue.

Some news outlets are reporting that Michigan libraries will be distributing COVID-19 rapid test kits to the public. This is breaking news, and libraries seem to be the last to know! Our colleagues at the Library of Michigan are meeting with representatives from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services the morning of January 14 to get more details for all of us. I'm hoping to get the full story at the Michigan Library Directors' meeting later on the 14th.

Finally, there has been no amendment yet to the Open Meetings Act, so trustees are still required to meet in person, regardless of the local pandemic status.

Submitted by John Rucker