



The Circuit Court
for the Tenth Judicial Circuit of Michigan

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TO: MEMBERS OF THE SAGINAW COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

This week I have been in a series of meetings centered around the issue of the increasing number of COVID related cases here in Saginaw County, and how we as a county and court system intend to address the issue. The data seems to support the notion that COVID is here to stay. And we will need to learn how to live with it, manage it, and mitigate its negative effects. To that end let me share with you a few sobering statistics that I have found out about in the last few days.

The “Delta Variant” that we hear so much about lately in the news has been here in Saginaw County since probably May of this year. Currently there are approximately 15 known cases of it county-wide. It is but one of several other variants that have been identified and that will be expected to cause further issues in the future.

Also, we recently had a fully vaccinated county employee test positive for COVID. A so-called “breakthrough” case. In fact, since January, there have been at least 180 of these types of cases here in Saginaw County overall. Our positivity rate and number of cases are both also expected to rise over the next several days and/or weeks.

Despite that information we are not closing the courthouse doors to the public and we are not in total lockdown mode at the courthouse as we were at one time in the past. Judges may still schedule limited in-person civil or criminal proceedings if they choose to do so. Or they elect to hold matters via Zoom. And until further notice all jury trials scheduled will be held at an offsite location.

At this point, there is no county-wide mask mandate being imposed on the public or on employees. People are of course free to “mask up” if they so choose. The emphasis to try and reduce our COVID numbers is currently focused on behavioral things. Washing your hands frequently, covering your coughs and sneezes and staying home if you are feeling sick, or have tested positive for COVID.

Finally, rumors are rampant as people are on edge and wondering where we are headed. So, I think it is important for me to emphasize once again that for now, **the courthouse is not closing to the public**. But we are taking steps internally which we hope will prevent the need for us to do so in the future.