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Governor Whitmer Announces 5 Million Vaccinations, Calls on Federal Government to Surge Additional Vaccines to Michigan

To slow the spread and protect Michiganders, Governor urges Michiganders to voluntarily suspend in-person activities for high schools, indoor dining, and youth sports for two weeks.

LANSING, Mich. – At a press conference in Lansing today, Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced that Michigan will hit more than five million vaccinations by the end of the day. While vaccine supply has increased dramatically since the Biden Administration took office, the state is currently experiencing a serious spike in COVID-19 cases that is putting pressure on Michigan hospital systems. To slow the spread of the virus and protect more Michiganders, the governor renewed her call for the federal government to surge additional vaccines to Michigan, while also urging high schools to shift to remote learning, encouraging diners to choose outdoor dining or takeout instead of indoor seating, and recommending youth sports suspend in-person activities for the next two weeks.

“Administering more than five million doses of the safe and effective COVID vaccine in under four months is a big deal, but we’ve still got a lot more work to do,” said **Governor Whitmer**. “Right now our numbers are alarming, and we all have a role to play to get our state moving in the right direction again. That’s why I’m renewing my call on the federal government to surge additional vaccines to our state. And it’s why I’m urging high schools and youth sports to voluntarily suspend in-person activities for the next two weeks. This is a team effort. It’s on all of us to do our part by masking up and getting vaccinated to protect ourselves and our families, so we can get back to normal. Let’s get it done.”

While many states across the country have dropped basic health protocols altogether, the State of Michigan continues to implement smart health policies and mitigation measures to slow the spread of COVID-19, including a statewide mask mandate, limits on indoor social gatherings larger than 25 people, expanded testing requirements for youth sports, and dozens of pop-up testing sites across the state.

“As a parent and former student-athlete myself, I understand how important athletics are to our children’s physical and mental health. However, parents and athletes need to understand the risk involved with youth sports if they choose to participate,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health. “We’ve seen that the younger population has played a significant role in transmission during this most recent spike. I urge youth sports organizers to pause in-person activities for the next couple weeks, and as always, mask up, wash your hands, social distance and get your safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you are able.”

Over the last few weeks, Michigan has tracked outbreaks associated with youth sports. To prevent additional outbreaks, Governor Whitmer is urging youth sports on both school-sponsored and non-school sponsored teams to suspend in-person activities, like games and practices, for the next two weeks. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) requires testing for youth sports between the ages of 13-19, and provides testing assistance through the MI Safer Sports testing program, which expanded weekly testing protocols for athletes and teams. For all youth sports, participants must test on at least a weekly basis for COVID-19, and also before any unmasked activity.

“Based on the increase in positivity rates and hospitalizations, we need the help of Michiganders,” said **Tina Freese Decker**, President & CEO of Spectrum Health. “We ask you to practice the safety behaviors that we know work and get vaccinated as soon as possible. This will help us slow the spread and hopefully this will be our last surge.”

In addition to urging youth sports to suspend in-person activities, Governor Whitmer is asking high schools to utilize virtual instruction for the next two weeks to slow the spread of COVID-19. MDHHS issued guidance to schools strongly encouraging them to enroll in the department’s testing program if they are open to in-person instruction. Additionally, the state is offering 56 pop-up sites located throughout Michigan as part of the special program in an effort to increase access to testing for Michiganders returning from Spring Break. For more information on additional test sites, visit Michigan.gov/Coronavirustest.

“Our recent COVID case numbers are the highest in the nation, and hospitalizations have climbed significantly in the last month. Michigan educators, students, and families have risen to the challenge over the past year, and I am confident they will continue to do what is needed to help save lives as we keep fighting the pandemic,” said **State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice**. “I support the recommendations of the governor. I urge schools to contribute the next two weeks toward the common good of our state and the health of our residents.”

Governor Whitmer is also urging Michiganders to avoid dining indoors and avoid gathering with friends indoors for two weeks. The unfortunate nature of this deadly virus is that it spreads quickly when people are gathered indoors without masks for an extended period of time. By opting to dine outdoors or order takeout, restaurants can remain open while operating safely to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

“MSYSA appreciates Governor Whitmer providing us the opportunity to review our specific risk mitigation strategies and return to play guidelines,” said **Thomas Faro**, Executive Director of Michigan State Youth Soccer Association, Inc. “We acknowledge the need for our members to continue to do their part with the consistent use of facial coverings and social distancing so that children can play soccer.”

To date, Michigan has administered more than five million vaccines, moving the state closer to its goal of equitably vaccinating at least 70% of Michiganders ages 16 and older as soon as possible. Last week, Governor Whitmer raised Michigan’s COVID-19 vaccination goal from 50,000 to 100,000 shots per day. After announcing the state had surpassed four million vaccines administered on March 29, another one million vaccine doses were administered in less than two weeks to reach the five million vaccine milestone.

For the latest information on Michigan’s response to COVID-19, please visit Michigan.gov/Coronavirus. You may also call the COVID-19 Hotline at 888-535-6136, or email COVID-19@michigan.gov.

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