
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AREA HEALTH DEPARTMENTS, HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS, AND UNIVERSITIES LAUNCH COVID-19 VACCINE WEBSITE
Site to serve as West Michigan's 'go-to' source for credible information about the vaccine

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (December 15, 2020) – A consortium of West Michigan health departments, hospitals, healthcare providers, universities and others have launched www.VaccinateWestMI.com where area residents can find the latest information about the COVID-19 vaccine. The site includes information about vaccine availability, local distribution plans, safety and efficacy, and will be updated regularly as new information becomes available.

“The COVID-19 vaccine is safe, highly effective and will be our best defense against the virus,” said Dr. Adam London, director of the Kent County Health Department. “But it won’t be available to everyone immediately. It’s critical for the residents of West Michigan to have access to accurate, timely and consistent information about the vaccine so we can all do our part to slow the spread of the virus. That’s why we joined with partners throughout the region to launch this site.”

The Pfizer vaccine was the first to be approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for emergency use in the U.S. on December 11, but initial supplies are extremely limited. Shipping to a select group of health departments and hospitals nationwide began on Sunday. The first shipments arrived at area hospitals yesterday, with vaccines starting among frontline health care workers this week. Workers and residents of long-term care facilities are also slated to be among the first to receive the vaccine, with other high-risk groups scheduled to follow. As supplies of the vaccine increase, those at lower risk will qualify. Experts project all individuals 16 years and older will qualify to get vaccinated by mid to late 2021.

“We are happy our community is eager to get their vaccines, but we ask everyone to be patient,” said Lisa Stefanovsky health officer of the Ottawa County Department of Public Health. “As vaccines become available, our healthcare providers will distribute the vaccine according to the plans developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, a national independent committee of medical and public health experts. We encourage all area residents to regularly check VaccinateWestMI.com for the latest information.”

The website will be regularly updated as information becomes available, and visitors to the site can sign up for email updates on the vaccine.

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

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Members of the consortium include: Kent County Health Department, Allegan County Health Department, Barry-Eaton District Health Department, Berrien County Health Department, District Health Department #10, Ionia County Health Department, Mid-Michigan District Health Department, Muskegon County - Public Health, Ottawa County Department of Public Health, Mercy Health Saint Mary's, Metro Health – University of Michigan Health, Spectrum Health, Holland Hospital, Spectrum Health Lakeland, North Ottawa Community Hospital, Michigan Health & Hospital Association, Answer Health, Cherry Health, CVS Pharmacy, Kent County Emergency Medical Services, SpartanNash, We Are For Children, Calvin University, Grand Valley State University and Michigan State University College of Human Medicine.

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