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Contact: press@michigan.gov

Governor Whitmer Unveils Plan to Get ‘MI Vacc to Normal’

The ‘MI Vacc to Normal’ Plan outlines four vaccination-based milestones to get the state back to normal.

LANSING, Mich. – Governor Gretchen Whitmer today set the state of Michigan on a pathway to return to normal by unveiling the ‘MI Vacc to Normal’ plan as the state continues to push toward its goal of vaccinating 70% of Michiganders ages 16 years or older. To facilitate this goal, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) will base future epidemic order actions on four vaccination-based milestones that, once achieved, will enable Michigan to take a step toward normalcy.

“The MI Vacc to Normal challenge outlines steps we can take to emerge from this pandemic as we hit our vaccination targets together,” said **Governor Gretchen Whitmer**. “On our path to vaccinating 70% of Michiganders 16 and up, we can take steps to gradually get back to normal while keeping people safe. If you haven’t already, I encourage you to rise to the challenge and be a part of the solution so we can continue our economic recovery and have the summer we all crave.”

Since Governor Whitmer asked Michiganders to double down on smart public health policies on April 9, Michigan has made significant progress to slow the spread of COVID-19 and save lives. The number of daily cases has dropped from 649.9 cases per million to 439.3 cases per million, the percent of positive tests has declined from 18.3% to 13.2%, and the number hospitalizations has fallen from 3,780 to 3,520.

“We can end this virus on our terms by following the protocols we are putting forward, encouraging everyone in your life to do the same, and ensuring that everyone eligible to receive a vaccine gets one,” said **Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist**. “What we have been observing across our state is that the thing that moves a person to choose to get vaccinated is hearing from someone they know about why it is so important, why they chose to get vaccinated. That means that every person who has not yet chosen to get vaccinated is one conversation away from making that choice. We can make that happen for them and for all of us. The MI Vacc to Normal challenge is a great reminder that we’re all on one team, working towards ending COVID-19.”

Recently, Michigan reached another vaccination milestone in record time -- administering more than six million doses of the safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, with the latest one million doses being administered in 11 days. Although progress has been made, it is crucial that Michiganders continue to mask up and socially distance as the state takes steps to get back to normal. It is also crucial for everyone to get their second doses of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, which Michiganders have been doing at a rate of 96.4%, above the national average.

“The safe and effective vaccine is the most important tool we have to reduce the spread of COVID-19” said **Dr. Joneigh Khaldun**, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health at MDHHS. “By getting shots in their arms as soon as possible, Michiganders can protect themselves, their families and their communities and help end this pandemic as quickly as possible.”

Michigan continues to have some of the strongest public health policies in the Midwest. The state still has a mask mandate and capacity limitations on indoor dining, indoor gatherings, and entertainment venues. As the number of vaccinations increase, [experts have said](#) that states can begin loosening some public health policies as these activities become less risky for vaccinated individuals.

“Our state had made great progress in slowing the spread of COVID-19 since Governor Whitmer asked for Michiganders to step up on April 9,” said **Elizabeth Hertel**, MDHHS director. “I am proud of the progress that we have made by working together. If residents continue to get their vaccines, wear masks and avoid indoor gatherings, we will soon be able to take further steps to loosen our public health requirements and better be able to enjoy the activities that we all love.”

The ‘MI Vacc to Normal’ plan will use four vaccination-based milestones -- using data for Michiganders 16 years or older who’ve received their first dose -- to guide future steps required to get back to normal:

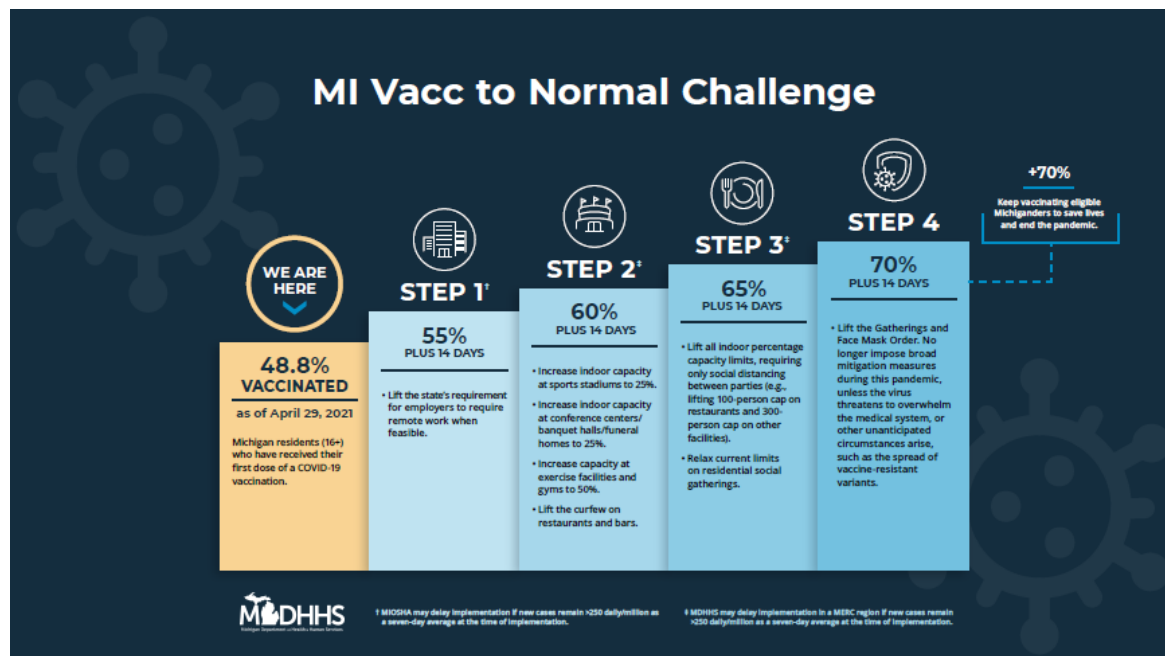
- **55% of Michiganders (4,453,304 residents), plus two weeks**
 - Allows in-person work for all sectors of business.
- **60% of Michiganders (4,858,150 residents), plus two weeks**
 - Increases indoor capacity at sports stadiums to 25%.
 - Increases indoor capacity at conference centers/banquet halls/funeral homes to 25%.
 - Increases capacity at exercise facilities and gyms to 50%.
 - Lifts the curfew on restaurants and bars.
- **65% of Michiganders (5,262,996 residents), plus two weeks**
 - Lifts all indoor % capacity limits, requiring only social distancing between parties.
 - Further relaxes limits on residential social gatherings.
- **70% of Michiganders (5,667,842 residents), plus two weeks**
 - Lifts the Gatherings and Face Masks Order such that MDHHS will no longer employ broad mitigation measures unless unanticipated circumstances arise, such as the spread of vaccine-resistant variants.

“After a year of hardship, perseverance and sacrifice, Michiganders have the opportunity to safely reclaim the events that bring meaning and enjoyment to our lives,” said **Louis Vega**, president of Dow North America. “Dow and our community partners are proud to again host an LPGA golf tournament at the Midland Country Club – known as the Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational – that generates millions of dollars of economic activity in the Great Lakes Bay region. This important community event will be possible if we work together to achieve the vaccination targets that are being announced today. Dow encourages all Michiganders to get vaccinated.”

“On behalf of the Michigan Fitness Club Association, we applaud and support Governor Whitmer in her efforts to get the residents of Michigan vaccinated and for establishing vaccination goals that will allow Michigan businesses to get back to normal,” said **Bryan Rief**, chair of the Michigan Fitness Club Association and chief executive officer of Planet Fitness Michigan Group. “The safety and well-being of our employees and members has always been our #1 priority. With the dire consequences the pandemic has had on Michiganders, both physically and mentally, it is more important than ever to emphasize that fitness is essential. Today’s announcement is a step in the right direction.”

“We appreciate Governor Whitmer providing a clear pathway forward for Michigan to continue reopening and a return to normal, said **Larisa Draves**, executive director of the Michigan Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus. “The last 13 months have been especially difficult on our tourism and hospitality industry. We recognize the Governor’s diligence and commitment to provide Michigan citizens with broad access to vaccinations. Having a plan for further reopening provides continued hope for all Michigan citizens and for our industry; we urge all Michiganders to do their part by getting vaccinated.”

“Having a set plan to get establishments fully reopened is promising. Michigan’s bars and restaurants have long-awaited an indication of the end of the pandemic,” said MLBA Executive Director **Scott Ellis**. “The hospitality industry appreciates the public support we’ve received throughout the past year and we encourage those interested in getting vaccinated to do so as soon as possible to help our struggling businesses get back on their feet.”



If new cases remain greater than 250 daily/million as a 7-day average in a Michigan Economic Recovery Committee (MERC) region at the time of implementing steps 2 through 3, MDHHS may delay implementation in that MERC region.

To date, Michigan has administered 6,657,997 vaccines. Currently, 48.8% of Michiganders ages 16 and older have received at least one dose, with 35.9% percent of Michiganders ages 16 and older being fully vaccinated, moving the state closer to its goal of equitably vaccinating at least 70% of Michiganders ages 16 and older as soon as possible.

Also today MDHHS announced that the department and Protect Michigan Commission are launching [new television spots](#) this week featuring stories from Michiganders on why they chose to get the COVID-19 vaccine. The new ads are part of the next phase of the “Spread Hope, Not COVID” campaign that MDHHS launched last fall.

[The spots](#) open with the question asked to community members featured in the ads: “Why did you get vaccinated?” One woman responded, “Because I’m 24 weeks pregnant and we wanted to protect our baby boy.” Another man shared, “To be able to hug my mom again. I haven’t been able to hug her in over a year.” One woman said that her “why” was her best friend, who passed away from COVID-19 the day before her birthday.

The spots were recorded Friday, April 16, outside the Ford Field vaccination site in Detroit. Additional spots were recorded outside a Detroit Medical Center vaccination location at the Northwest Activity Center in Detroit on Friday, April 23.

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