



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

ROBERT GORDON
DIRECTOR

December 7, 2020

Dear Partners,

The COVID-19 pandemic has made life very challenging this year, impacting every part of society. I know many of you have been impacted personally and professionally, and I want to thank you for your continued dedication and work to serve the residents of Michigan.

While we are in the midst of a fall surge, I am encouraged because I know Michiganders have what it takes to bring the curve down as we did in the spring. Many people are in fact doing the right thing by wearing masks and avoiding indoor gatherings. We are on our way to meeting our goals for flu vaccination, well ahead of where we were last season. And, there is incredible hope on the horizon – already two manufacturers have submitted applications to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to be able to distribute safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, and we expect those to be approved as early as this month.

The two vaccines that are currently in the approval process have data showing they are more than 90% effective and have demonstrated no major adverse side effects in clinical trials. While the timeline for development has been condensed, there have been no shortcuts made in the regulatory and development process. These vaccines mean that we will be able to get control of this pandemic, and that many more lives will be saved. We will see fewer cases and deaths next year. But the vaccines will only be effective if people are able and willing to accept them. That is where we need your help!

Collectively you represent millions of Michigan citizens who live in rural and urban areas, and work in our state's most important industries, businesses, organizations and institutions. When we roll out the COVID-19 vaccine, these are steps we need you to take to help us end this pandemic and save lives in Michigan:

1. **Continue to promote scientifically proven practices to prevent the spread of the virus.** Even after a vaccine arrives, it will take months to broadly immunize Michigan's population. That means we must continue to encourage mask wearing, hand washing, social distancing and contact tracing. Our 'Spread Hope, Not COVID' campaign continues to issue relevant and timely messaging as swiftly as possible to keep these actions top-of-mind, and your amplification of these messages to members, employees, constituencies and more is essential to keeping people safe.
2. **Help us spread the word that vaccines are approved only after they have been held to the highest safety standards.** By the time a vaccine is offered to the public, it has been administered to tens of thousands of study participants, and that data has been reviewed by the country's top public health, medical and immunizations experts. This is true of the COVID-19 vaccines too. The COVID-19 vaccines have been developed faster than any

vaccine before thanks to unprecedented, worldwide collaboration among scientists, medical doctors, health and government officials, and manufacturers. This collective effort has allowed researchers to shorten the typical vaccine timeline without sacrificing safety or quality. **In the coming weeks, we will be providing you with communications about the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccines that we will ask you to share with your audiences, employees, members, customers, clients and other constituencies.** We have provided talking points with this letter. As we receive more information, we will continue to share with you. We also encourage you to visit Michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine, as information will continue to be added in the coming days and weeks.

3. **Help us inform Michiganders when it's time for their COVID-19 vaccinations.** The first allocations of vaccine to Michigan are unknown at this point. We do know that early on vaccines will be available in only limited amounts and will be targeted towards healthcare workers and residents of long-term care facilities. As more vaccine becomes available, we will expand distribution and hope that by late spring the vaccine will be available to the general public. We will be doing everything we can to communicate the distribution plan as quickly as we can and when we receive more information from the federal government. Your support in getting this information out to residents, and in return, notifying our team of concerns or issues as soon as possible, will directly affect the confidence residents have in the vaccines.

The next few months will continue to be hard, but I have hope. The vaccines are a game changer and means that the end to this pandemic is in sight. I encourage you to all continue to join us in our efforts as we continue this fight to protect as many Michiganders as possible from this virus.

Sincerely,



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