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**Four Michigan universities receive \$18.5 million in federal funding to expand sequencing for COVID-19 and other infectious diseases**  
*Michigan Tech University, Michigan State University, University of Michigan and Wayne State University to expand state's sequencing capacity*

LANSING, Mich. – Four Michigan universities will receive \$18.5 million in federal funds over the next two years to collect and analyze genomic data to address emerging infectious disease threats and enhance the state's ability to respond to those threats, announced the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) today.

Michigan Tech University, Michigan State University, University of Michigan and Wayne State University will use the funding to increase sequencing capacity in the state starting with SARS-CoV-2 and then other infectious disease threats with the potential for broad community spread. Funding for the Michigan Sequencing Academic Partnership for Public Health Innovation and Response (MI-SAPPHIRE) is through a CDC Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity grant MDHHS received. MI-SAPPHIRE activities will include sequence generation and analysis, such as sample collection and sequencing; data processing, storage and sharing; and data interpretation and analytics.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance and need for genomic sequencing, surveillance and epidemiology capacity both globally and right here in Michigan," said Elizabeth Hertel, MDHHS director. "The MDHHS Bureau of Laboratories has rapidly expanded its efforts to identify COVID-19 variants since the start of the pandemic to support public health actions. MI-SAPPHIRE will allow our state to expand sequencing and analysis capacity and the number of pathogens that undergo routine sequencing, and ensure we are sampling diverse geographic areas across the state."

MDHHS has been a leader in national sequencing and genomic epidemiology as the national center for tuberculosis sequencing, PulseNet foodborne pathogen regional center, and SARS-CoV-2. The state generates over 25,000 genomes per year for bacterial and viral organisms. Partnerships with the four universities will allow for the scalability of capacity and response for SARS-CoV-2 and other pathogens.

The MDHHS BOL has sequenced 23,000 COVID-19 samples since March 2020. The University of Michigan lab has also conducted sequencing throughout the pandemic to provide information about COVID-19 variants circulating in the state.

Data generated or activities funded must support public health action, surveillance activities, infrastructure development or pandemic response efforts. Data or projects generated solely for research purposes and not directly actionable by state epidemiologists are not allowable with federal grant funds.

For more information on genetic sequencing, visit [What is Genomic Surveillance? | CDC](#).

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