



# **NEWS RELEASE**

## **STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **MDHHS Ramps Up Testing at Nursing Homes, Schools, Airports, Communities to Slow Spread of COVID-19**

*Testing plus masks and vaccines are the best tools we have to slow spread of the virus*

**LANSING, MICH.** To help slow the spread of COVID-19 throughout Michigan, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is ramping up testing and urging Michiganders to continue mitigation practices that help slow the spread of the virus.

“Now is the time for us all to come together and do what’s necessary to end this pandemic,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health. “We are making progress in the fight against the virus with more than 4 million doses administered and 2.6 million Michiganders having at least their first dose of the safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine. It is important, now more than ever, that we double down on the things that work: wearing masks, social distancing, getting tested and making plans to get vaccinated as soon as possible.”

The presence of more infectious variants, such as the B.1.1.7 variant, threatens the state’s progress in controlling the pandemic and MDHHS continues to monitor the data closely.

“Our goal is to loosen restrictions while reducing public health risk which is why we move slowly to maintain progress and momentum with thoughtful public health measures,” said Elizabeth Hertel, MDHHS director. “We are also increasing testing in key populations to help identify cases more quickly, and help prevent additional spread of the virus.”

As part of the state’s efforts to help fight the virus and keep Michiganders healthy:

- More than 1.4 million antigen tests have been sent to long-term care facilities.
- More than 72,000 free tests have been conducted at neighborhood testing sites in socially vulnerable communities and continue to provide testing. To locate a testing site near you, visit [Michigan.gov/Coronavirustest](https://Michigan.gov/Coronavirustest).
- Over 76,000 students, student-athletes and educators in K-12 schools have been tested in more than 500 school districts.
- [Testing for student-athletes](#) begins Friday, April 2. This testing program is vital to ensure school can remain open and students are able to be in the classroom.
- [Free post-spring break testing pop up sites](#) are planned for school districts in 34 communities.
- Testing sites at Welcome Centers and Michigan airports are in the works for returning travelers.

As of Monday, April 5, all Michiganders age 16 and up who were not previously eligible will be eligible to receive a vaccine. This is based on the anticipated amount of vaccines becoming available to the state

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and President Biden's directive that all adults should be eligible by May 1. As providers are scheduling appointments, they should consider an individual's risk of exposure due to their employment and their vulnerability to severe disease in determining how to prioritize scheduling appointments. Vaccine providers with the capacity to vaccinate all individuals ages 16 years and older may do so at this time.

It is anticipated that it may still take several weeks beyond April 5 for everyone who wishes to receive a vaccine to have an appointment. Michiganders are encouraged to be patient as supplies and appointments continue to expand. Those who want the vaccine will be able to get the vaccine.

Those eligible to receive a vaccine should:

- Check the website of the local health department or hospital to find out their process or for registration forms; or
- Check additional vaccination sites, such as local pharmacies like [Meijer](#), [Rite Aid](#), [Kroger](#), [Walmart](#) (Mid/Central and Northern MI) or [Snyder Drugs](#) (U.P. residents); or
- Residents who don't have access to the internet or who need assistance navigating the vaccine scheduling process can call the COVID-19 Hotline at 888-535-6136 (press 1), Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. or can call 2-1-1.

Michigan residents seeking more information about the COVID-19 vaccine can visit [Michigan.gov/COVIDvaccine](https://Michigan.gov/COVIDvaccine). Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://Michigan.gov/Coronavirus) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](https://CDC.gov/Coronavirus).

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