Governor Whitmer Secures Extension of Michigan National Guard Through March 31 to Assist With COVID-19

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Media Contact: **Press@Michigan.gov**

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LANSING, Mich. -- Today, Governor Gretchen Whitmer issued the following statement after securing the extension of Michigan National Guard forces for COVID-19 response through March 31, 2021. Title 32 authority, which allows Guard members to receive federal pay and benefits, was previously set to expire on December 31, 2020, due to a deadline set by the Trump Administration.

"The Michigan National Guard continues to be a crucial part of our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. I want to thank our men and women in uniform for their dedication and round-the-clock work to protect the people of our state by expanding testing in our communities and ensuring they have what they need to get through this crisis. I implore the president once again to listen to public health experts and work with Mitch McConnell and Nancy Pelosi on a bipartisan recovery package that protects American families, frontline workers, and small business owners," said **Governor Whitmer.** "COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations are skyrocketing in Michigan and across the country, and if we're going to get through this winter, we need the federal government to step up and provide this crucial support."

In anticipation of rapid vaccine approvals from the Food and Drug Administration, Michigan will look to the Michigan National Guard to provide logistical support and transportation support to help distribute the vaccines.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, Michigan National Guard members have helped distribute more than 14 million pounds of food at food banks, delivered tests and protective equipment across the state, and assisted with testing more than 200 thousand Michiganders for COVID-19.

The Guard is partnering with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and local health departments to offer COVID-19 testing, provide antigen training for health care practitioners, and to provide informational assistance in call centers.

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