Michigan Launches Automated Online Assistant to Answer Common COVID-19 Questions

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 30, 2020

Contact: Lynn Sutfin, 517-241-2112

LANSING, MICH. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has launched Robin, a new automated online assistant that can help Michiganders easily access the latest and most trusted information about the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly and there’s a great deal of misinformation online,” said Robert Gordon, MDHHS director. “Robin, our new chatbot, is an easy, interactive way for Michiganders to get their question answered without frustrating wait times. Every moment counts in our fight to increase awareness and education and slow the spread of the virus.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted normal operations for many State of Michigan resources. Robin will provide a centralized, first line of response to common inquiries. This will help reduce confusion and frustration, and make it easier to find answers.

The online assistant will also help to reduce calls to the COVID-19 hotline, which means decreased wait times for those who have more complicated questions and need to speak to a staff person. Since March 14, the COVID-19 hotline team has answered more than 26,000 calls.

How does Robin work?

Developed by IBM, the chatbot interprets user questions and directs the flow of the conversation by providing the most likely and informed response. Robin searches for the information it needs to respond to questions based on the rich database it is built upon. It can also help identify gaps in service and information to more efficiently address needed resources.

For any questions that cannot be answered, Robin will direct users to email COVID19@michigan.gov or call the COVID-19 hotline at 888-535-6136, which is available seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Public health and other experts answer health-related questions about COVID-19, and can also direct residents, providers and others to resources in their local communities.

Note that Robin and call center staff cannot provide individual clinical advice or a diagnosis. If you believe you have been exposed to COVID-19 and are symptomatic, call your health care provider. If you do not have a health care provider, call the nearest urgent care center and ask about COVID-19 testing. Those who are experiencing mild symptoms and believe they have been exposed to COVID-19 can be tested.

Visit Michigan.gov/Coronavirus to find the nearest testing site.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at Michigan.gov/Coronavirus and CDC.gov/Coronavirus.

###

Coronavirus Disease 2019

Online Services

- Child Welfare Licensing Online Complaint Form
- Report Welfare Fraud
- Report WIC Fraud
- MDHHS Policy Manuals
- Child Support
- MI Bridges: Apply for Assistance & Manage Your Account
- Submit a FOIA Request
- Birth, Death, Marriage, Divorce Certificates
- E-license - Renew Health Professional License Online!
- Medicaid Provider Manual
- Verify Health Professional License
- Prescription Drug & Opioid Abuse Prevention

Join The Conversation

Tweets by @MichiganHHS

Michigan HHS Dept Retweeted

Elizabeth Hertel
@MDHHS_Director

We have said all along that the vaccine would help us return to a sense of normalcy and today we announce that day is here. #MIDoseofHope https://twitter.com/GovWhitmer/status/1405598054284148741

3h

Michigan HHS Dept Retweeted

Michigan.gov
@migovernment

Stay Smart. Stay Safe. @MichiganHHS reports today, June 17, 2021, 172 new COVID-19 cases & 20* deaths. For * details bit.ly/2KcnkrO. Michigan's total cases are now 893,002 & 19,598 deaths. Find the latest data & #COVID19 news at

Copyright 2021 State of Michigan