MDHHS

22 awardees announced in state's community outreach COVID-19 vaccine pilot program Program aims to remove barriers to safe and effective vaccine for most vulnerable

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LANSING, Mich. - The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and the Protect Michigan Commission have awarded 35,800 doses of COVID-19 vaccine to 22 pilot projects in an effort to help enhance the state's vaccine equity strategy.

The goal of the pilot program is to help remove barriers to vaccine access for Michiganders 60 and older who live in communities with high Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) and high COVID-19 mortality rates. If providers have additional capacity in their project, they may expand vaccination to include people age 50-59 with disabilities or comorbid conditions.

SVI is a tool that uses census data to identify places where a community may have more difficulty preventing human suffering and financial loss in a disaster. It assesses the extent that 15 known indicators are present within a community based on socioeconomic status, family composition and disability, minority status and language, housing and transportation.

"We want to make sure all Michiganders have access to the safe and effective vaccines as we work toward our goal of vaccinating 70% of Michiganders age 16 and up as quickly as possible," said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health with MDHHS. "I want to thank everyone who submitted an application to support these efforts and to help increase vaccinations for those most at risk of negative COVID-19 outcomes. I look forward to more outreach to vulnerable communities as vaccine supplies increase. Your ability to get a vaccine should not be impacted by whether you are in a rural or urban part of the state, are lower income, are living with a disability, are not fluent in English, or don't have access to a car, a computer or the Internet."

Michigan providers were encouraged to apply if they could help remove barriers for those ages 60 and up who are most vulnerable to the effects of the virus. More than 70 applications were received. A volunteer panel from the Protect Michigan Commission, which included community professionals, completed the review of the applications and selected the awardees, which could request up to 2,500 vaccine doses.

"I want to thank the volunteers from the Protect Michigan Commission who took the time to review these applications so quickly and thoroughly," said Kerry Ebersole Singh, Protect Michigan Commission director. "These pilot projects will help improve access to the effective COVID-19 vaccine in Michigan and ultimately get us closer to ending this pandemic. The safe COVID vaccine is the most effective way to protect you, your family and others from COVID. It will help the country get back to normal and help the economy. Over 1 million Michiganders have already been safely vaccinated."

The following organizations are participating in the community outreach pilot project:

- Advanced Pharmacy - Kalamazoo County
- Alma Family Practice, P.C. - Gratiot County
- Allegan County Health Department - Allegan County
- Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) - Wayne County
- Bay-Arenac Behavioral Health Authority - Bay County
- Calhoun County Public Health Department - Calhoun County
- Covered Bridge Healthcare - St. Joseph County
- Cristo Rey Family Health Center - Ingham County
- Dearborn Fire Department - Wayne County

- Genoa Healthcare - Oakland County
- Henry Ford Health System - Macomb, Wayne, Jackson, Oakland counties
- Ingham County Health Department - Ingham County
- Kent County Health Department - Kent County
- Mid-Michigan Health - Alcona, Alpena, Clair, counties
- Northwest Michigan Health Services, Inc. - Oceana, Mason, Manistee, Benzie counties
- Saginaw County Health Department - Saginaw County
- Region VII Area Agency on Aging - Saginaw County
- Schoolcraft Memorial Hospital - Schoolcraft County
- St. Clair County Health Department - St. Clair County
- Wayne Health - Wayne County
- Washtenaw County Health Department - Washtenaw County
- Western Wayne Family Health Center - Wayne County

These providers were chosen because:

- They are federally enrolled to administer the COVID-19 vaccines.
- They can successfully store and manage the vaccine.
- They can identify a method for participants to get a second dose.
- They can enter doses administered into the Michigan Care Improvement Registry within 24 hours.
- They have strong partnerships with organizations that can help reach out to the community's most vulnerable residents 60 and older.
- They can help identify barriers and strategies to overcome those barriers for program participants, including, but not limited to:

1. Transportation.
2. Language.
3. Access related to sensory, cognitive, emotional or physical disabilities.
4. Vaccine hesitancy.
5. Other barriers experienced by underserved and minority populations.

The pilot program providers are expected to receive the vaccine this week. The vaccine doses must be administered within two weeks of receipt, with second doses being provided for administration four weeks later. MDHHS is looking forward to

reviewing the status of the pilots as they progress to identify best practices to remove barriers which will inform our strategic implementation.

The state's strategy to get 70% of Michiganders age 16 and older vaccinated as quickly as possible is being guided by the following principles:

- All Michiganders have equitable access to vaccines.
- Vaccine planning and distribution is inclusive and actively engages state and local government, public and private partners; and draws upon the experience and expertise of leaders from historically marginalized populations.
- Communications are transparent, accurate, and frequent public communications to build public trust.
- Data is used to promote equity, track progress and guide decision making.
- Resource stewardship, efficiency, and continuous quality improvement drive strategic implementation.
- The most recent vaccine prioritization guidance can be found on Michigan's COVID-19 website.

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

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