New online dashboard provides COVID-19 risk and trend data, helps inform MI Safe Start plan

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Contact: **Press@michigan.gov**

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LANSING, Mich. – A **new, online dashboard** launched today that visually illustrates COVID-19 risks and trends in Michigan, providing residents with important information about the pandemic status where they live and work.

Developed through a collaboration between the Michigan departments of Health and Human Services and Labor and Economic Opportunity and the University of Michigan, dashboard data is divided into Michigan Economic Recovery Committee (MERC) regions.

MERC regions were developed by merging Michigan's Emergency Preparedness Regions and Michigan's labor sheds – the major areas of the state where people live and travel to work based on U.S. Department of Labor data – so that any outbreak resulting from a return to work could be handled effectively under public health laws.

“The most important thing we can do right now is listen to the experts and follow the medical science,” said **Gov. Gretchen Whitmer**. “Our first responders have put their lives on the line during this crisis, and we owe it to them to get this right. This dashboard will provide us with the data we need to assess risk in different regions of the state so we can re-engage our economy safely and deliberately, while working to minimize the risk of a second wave of infections. The whole goal here is to help ensure we keep more people healthy and out of hospitals.”

The COVID-19 data displayed on the dashboard represents publicly available case, death and test data analyzed to determine overall level of risk and key trends. Graphs, numbers and trends provide a snapshot of how much virus is in a community, and whether it is increasing or decreasing.

Risk levels were developed by MDHHS and the U-M School of Public Health using guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, national Guidelines for Opening America and several other leading national organizations.

“The risk levels tell us whether there is high, medium or low risk of COVID-19 spread in a community and can help highlight areas where more social distancing may be needed, or where vulnerable individuals should be particularly careful,” said **Dr. Joneigh Khaldun**, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health.

The dashboard, designed and created by faculty at U-M School of Information and School of Public Health, presents risk and capacity indicators that inform implementation of the **MI Safe Start Plan**. These indicators fall into three categories: epidemic spread, health system capacity and public health capacity. Each indicator displays a level of risk. These indicators, along with other epidemiologic information, inform the overall risk level for a region. It also incorporates on-the-ground knowledge, such as whether new cases of COVID-19 are localized to a single outbreak or represent communitywide spread.

"The U-M team is very excited to build this dashboard for the people and State of Michigan," said **Sharon Kardia**, Ph.D., Associate Dean at U-M School of Public Health. "This precision public health dashboard is very unique as it clearly shows everyone why some regions can open up more rapidly than others."

In addition to these risk and capacity indicators, other considerations such as the availability of mitigation measures, the risk posed by certain activities and other economic factors also inform decisions under the MI Safe Start Plan.

To learn more, visit **MiStartMap.info**.

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

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