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Health Department of Northwest Michigan COVID-19 Update

16+ with medical conditions, disabilities eligible for vaccine starting March 22 All Michiganders 16+ eligible on April 5

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is gearing up for the expanded eligibility announced recently, opening vaccination eligibility beginning March 22 for Michiganders ages 16 and older with disabilities or medical [conditions that put them at high risk of negative COVID-19 outcome](#). The state also announced that beginning April 5, all Michiganders age 16 and up who were not previously eligible will be eligible to receive a vaccine.

"We are pleased that the vaccination rollout is moving more quickly than initially anticipated," said Lisa Peacock, Health Officer for the health department. "This will be a large expansion and it is expected that initially demand may exceed available doses of vaccine. Yet, we will work diligently every week to administer the doses we receive to those who need them most and meet eligibility requirements."

This week, the health department is administering more than 1,700 first doses and almost 1,260 second doses to area residents who had previously pre-registered. Appointments for this week's clinics are being filled from the health department's list of those who have pre-registered.

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is allowing anyone who meets eligibility requirements to pre-register for a COVID-19 vaccination, including the most recent expanded groups of those 16 and older. Despite eligibility opening to more residents, the health department continues to prioritize vaccinating seniors, who are among our most vulnerable population. Appointments - which are always subject to the amount of vaccine available - will be scheduled based on age (oldest to youngest), and other risk factors such as disability, underlying conditions, and other social vulnerability index factors such as transportation, and living arrangements, as well as other factors that may put someone at a higher risk of COVID-19. The most recent [vaccine prioritization guidelines](#) can be found on Michigan's COVID-19 website.

Eligible individuals are encouraged to complete the pre-registration form by visiting www.nwhealth.org, or can call 2-1-1 for telephone assistance in completing the form. Residents should also check with local pharmacies and other providers for appointment availability.

"This is a significant expansion to vaccine eligibility, and as a result, appointments for individuals in these newly eligible groups may not be available immediately," Peacock said. "Please know that it will take time for us to coordinate making appointments for those currently on our waiting list and these new groups who will be signing up."

Even with the increase of COVID-19 vaccinations, health officials urge everyone to continue to practice preventative measures such as properly wearing masks, social distancing and frequent handwashing to reduce the spread of the virus until the vast majority of people have been vaccinated.

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For more information, visit nwhealth.org.

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In the health department's four county region of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego counties, much progress is being made towards the state's goal of vaccinating 70% of the population. As of Friday, 63.9% of the 65 and older population in the health department's jurisdiction have received at least one dose of the vaccine and 32.5% have received two doses.

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan reported 33 new cases on Saturday, March 13: Antrim (10), Charlevoix (3), Emmet (1), and Otsego (19) counties. On Sunday, March 14, 11 new cases were reported: Antrim (6), Charlevoix (3), Emmet (0), and Otsego (2) counties. Today, Monday, March 15, 31 new cases were reported: Antrim (5), Charlevoix (10), Emmet (6), and Otsego (10) counties. As of 4 p.m. today, the health department is reporting:

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (1,024), Charlevoix (1,098), Emmet (1,582), and Otsego (1,319).
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (879), Charlevoix (979), Emmet (1,363), and Otsego (1,030).
- Confirmed COVID-19 associated deaths in the following counties: Antrim (20), Charlevoix (13), Emmet (38), and Otsego (27).

The State of Michigan is reporting 610,580 cases and 15,783 deaths. As of March 12, 2021, cumulative recovered cases statewide are 556,697.

Stay up to date on the latest information in the Health Department of Northwest Michigan jurisdiction by [liking and following our Facebook page](#) and visiting our [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#). To locate a testing facility, visit the [Michigan COVID-19 Test Finder website](#). To track the risk levels of COVID-19 pandemic indicators, visit the [MI Safe Start Map website](#). For more information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, visit the MDHHS [vaccine website](#) or the [CDC vaccine website](#).