

Children need vaccines to protect them from 14 serious, even life-threatening diseases. Immunizations offer safe and effective protection from vaccine preventable diseases. To prevent outbreaks from occurring in schools and places where children congregate, a high percentage of children must be immunized.

Immunization requirements for schools vary by state. Over time, Michigan has implemented laws and rules to ensure that children are adequately immunized against vaccine preventable diseases:

- 1978: each student, upon entry into kindergarten or into a new school district involving grades 1-12, possess a certificate of immunization at the time of registration or not later than the first day of school.
- 2000: *Public Act 89* mandated an immunization assessment be completed for each sixth grade student.
- 2010: additional vaccine requirements were added.
- 2012: Senate Bills 237, 238, and 239 were passed by the Michigan legislature to move the sixth grade assessment to seventh grade.
- 2014: new educational requirement for Michigan parents opting their children out of getting vaccinated before entering school.

Prior to a child entering or attending school, parents or guardians are required to produce documentation confirming their child has received the school required immunizations, or in the alternative, their child received at least one dose of each of the required immunizations and is awaiting receipt of subsequent doses to be administered at appropriate intervals. In the following tables these children are considered “complete.”

A required vaccine may be waived or delayed if:

- 1) A valid medical contraindication exists precluding the child from receiving the vaccine. A medical waiver must be completed and signed by the child's physician and shall state the contraindication(s), the vaccine(s) involved, and the time period during which the child is precluded from receiving the vaccine(s).
- 2) The parent or guardian holds religious or philosophical beliefs which preclude receipt of a vaccination(s). Any parent/guardian who wants to claim a nonmedical waiver will need to receive education regarding the benefits of vaccination and the risks of disease from a county health department before obtaining the certified nonmedical waiver form through the Local Health Department. An updated waiver must be presented each time the child's immunization status is reported. Additional information on immunization waivers can be found [here](#).

Each year schools are required to report the immunization status of children enrolled in kindergarten and 7th grade (6th grade prior to 2014) and new entrants to the school district. The following report summarizes the immunization status of school children in Michigan and provides some historical trends.

During the 2014-15 school year Michigan had the 6th highest waiver rate for kindergarteners [compared](#) to other US states. Following the new 2014 educational requirement, there was a 35% decrease in the overall waiver rates from 2014 (4.8%) to 2015 (3.1%). Michigan improved to the 11th highest waiver rate in the [2015-16 school year](#) for kindergarteners. The 2016 data show a slight increase in overall waiver rates to 3.2%. However, this continues to be a 33.3% decrease from the 2014 waiver rates (prior to implementation of the educational requirement.) The change in waiver rates for kindergarteners, 7th graders and new entrants are outlined below.

Figure 1 displays the percentage of children receiving immunization waivers over time.

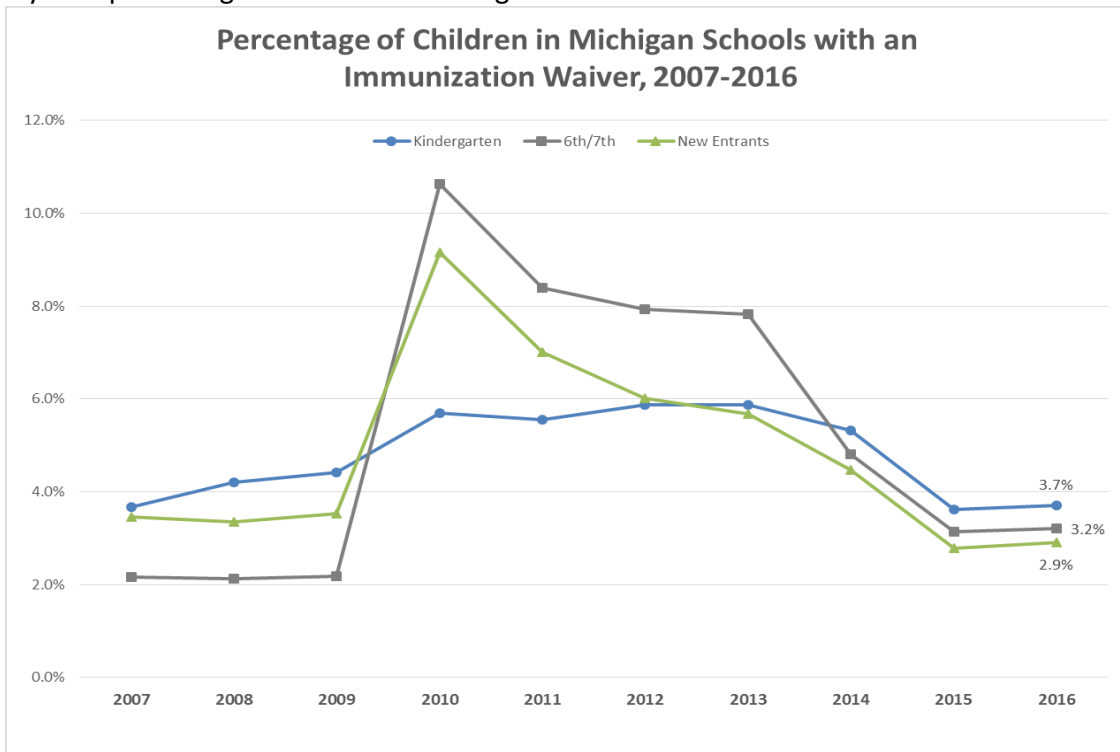
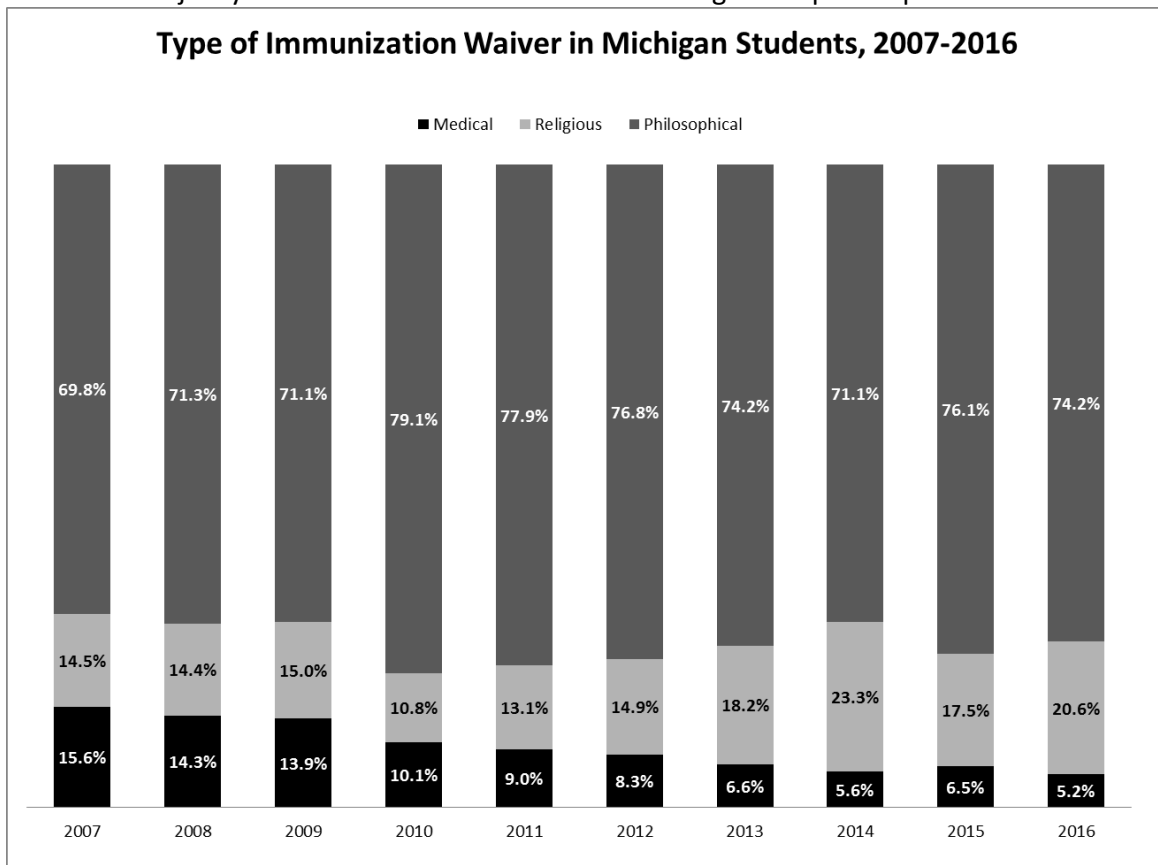


Figure 2 shows that a majority of the immunization waivers in Michigan are philosophical waivers.



Summary of Kindergarten Students

Table 1 displays the immunization status of kindergarten children in 2015 and 2016. Overall immunization waivers for kindergarten students slightly increased from 3.62% of children with a waiver in 2015 to 3.66% in 2016. While there was a slight increase, the 2016 waiver rate is a 30.2% decrease from the 2014 waiver rates (prior to implementation of the educational requirement.) The percentage of children with an immunization waiver continues to be higher in private schools (7.58%) than public schools (3.31%) in 2016.

Table 1: Kindergarten Immunization Assessment, 2015-2016.

	2015			2016		
	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private
Number of reporting schools	2,183	1,619	564	1,941	1,531	410
Number of students	116,213	106,682	9,531	118,853	109,182	9,671
Number of students complete	108,929	100,478	8,451	111,437	102,799	8,638
% complete	93.73%	94.18%	88.67%	93.76%	94.15%	89.32%
Total immunization waivers	4,203	3,493	710	4,347	3,614	733
% total waivers	3.62%	3.27%	7.45%	3.66%	3.31%	7.58%
Medical waivers	246	207	39	213	188	25
% medical waivers	0.21%	0.19%	0.41%	0.18%	0.17%	0.26%
Religious waivers	748	598	150	872	705	167
% religious waivers	0.64%	0.56%	1.57%	0.73%	0.65%	1.73%
Philosophical waivers	3,209	2,688	521	3,262	2,721	541
% philosophical waivers	2.76%	2.52%	5.47%	2.74%	2.49%	5.59%

Summary of Seventh Grade Students

Table 2 displays the immunization status of 7th graders in 2015 and 2016. The percentage of students with a complete record for the vaccines recommended for school entry was 94.23% overall in 2016. There were more students complete in public schools (94.58%) than private schools (89.14%). Immunization waivers slightly increased from 3.13% in 2015 to 3.19% in 2016.

Table 2: 7th Grade Immunization Assessment, 2015-2016.

	2015			2016		
	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private
Number of reporting schools	1,580	1,086	494	1,241	950	291
Number of students	114,639	107,125	7,514	117,305	109,830	7,475
Number of students complete	108,225	101,506	6,719	110,535	103,872	6,663
% complete	94.41%	94.75%	89.42%	94.23%	94.58%	89.14%
Total immunization waivers	3,591	3,184	407	3,738	3,328	410
% total waivers	3.13%	2.97%	5.42%	3.19%	3.03%	5.48%
Medical waivers	268	244	24	231	214	17
% medical waivers	0.23%	0.23%	0.32%	0.20%	0.19%	0.23%
Religious waivers	516	442	73	694	608	86
% religious waivers	0.45%	0.41%	0.97%	0.59%	0.55%	1.15%
Philosophical waivers	2,808	2,498	310	2,813	2,506	307
% philosophical waivers	2.45%	2.33%	4.13%	2.40%	2.28%	4.11%

Summary of New Entrants to the School District

Table 3 displays the immunization status of new entrants in 2015 and 2016 (when students enter a new school district, their immunization status is assessed to ensure all current vaccination requirements are met). From 2015 to 2016, the percentage of new entrants with an immunization waiver slightly increased from 2.79% to 2.87%.

Table 3. Immunization Assessment of New School Entrants, 2015-2016.

	2015			2016		
	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private
Number of reporting schools	3,861	3,213	648	3,460	3,042	418
Number of students	182,814	168,380	14,315	178,416	163,271	15,145
Number of students complete	172,532	159,575	12,888	167,615	153,931	13,684
% complete	94.38%	94.77%	90.03%	93.95%	94.28%	90.35%
Total immunization waivers	5,106	4,321	772	5,122	4,327	795
% total waivers	2.79%	2.57%	5.39%	2.87%	2.65%	5.25%
Medical waivers	321	272	49	241	212	29
% medical waivers	0.18%	0.16%	0.34%	0.14%	0.13%	0.19%
Religious waivers	988	832	152	1155	977	178
% religious waivers	0.54%	0.49%	1.06%	0.65%	0.60%	1.18%
Philosophical waivers	3,797	3,217	571	3,726	3,138	588
% philosophical waivers	2.08%	1.91%	3.99%	2.09%	1.92%	3.88%