

Immunization Status of School Children in Michigan, 2019

Key Points

- In Michigan there was a decrease in immunization waiver rates in 2019 compared to 2018 in the grades with reporting requirements:
 - Kindergarten: 4.4% compared to 4.5%
 - Seventh grade: 3.2% compared to 3.4%
 - New entrants to a school district: 3.3% compared to 3.5%
 - Overall (kindergarten, 7th grade and new entrants combined): 3.6% compared to 3.8%
- In 2014 an educational requirement was added to the waiver process and there was a 35% decrease in the overall waiver rates, from 4.8% in 2014 to 3.1% in 2015.
 - There were slight increases in overall waiver rates in 2016 (3.2%), 2017 (3.6%), and 2018 (3.8%).
 - The 2019 overall waiver rate is 25% lower than in 2014, with almost 6,000 fewer waivers each year compared to the over 20,000 waivers reported in schools in 2014.
 - Compared to 2014, the 2019 kindergarten waiver rate has decreased by 17.0%, the seventh grade rate has decreased by 33.3%, and the new entrant rate has decreased by 26.7%.

History of Immunization Waivers in Michigan

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 in schools and other 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 to kindergarten or a new school district involving grades 1-12, possess a certificate of immunization at registration or not later than the first day of school.
- 2000: *Public Act 89* mandated an immunization assessment for each sixth grade student.
- 2010: requirements for receipt of additional vaccines were added.
- 2012: Senate Bills 237, 238, and 239 moved the sixth grade assessment to seventh grade.
- 2014: new educational requirement for Michigan parents opting their children out of getting vaccinated before entering school.

Current Requirements in Michigan Schools

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 has 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 the child is precluded from receiving the vaccine(s).

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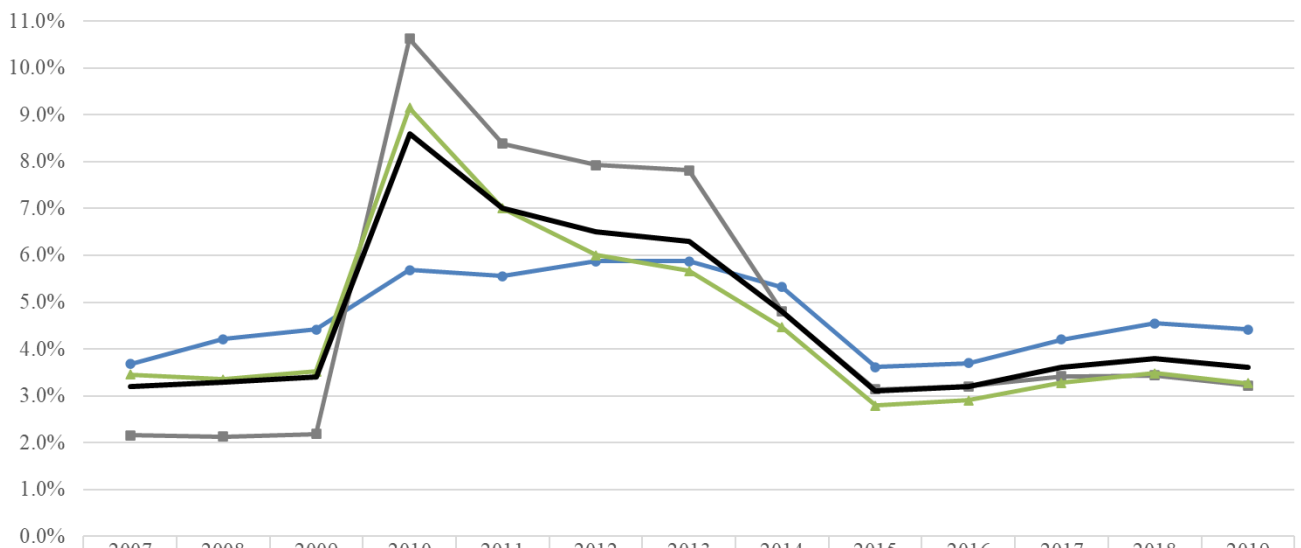
- 2) The parent or guardian holds religious or philosophical beliefs which preclude receipt of a vaccination(s). Any parent/guardian who wants to claim a nonmedical waiver will need to receive education regarding the benefits of vaccination and the risks of disease from a local health department (LHD) before obtaining the certified nonmedical waiver form through the LHD. 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, 7th grade (6th grade prior to 2012), and new entrants to the school district. Following the 2014 educational requirement, there was a 35% decrease in the overall waiver rates: from 4.8% in 2014 to 3.1% in 2015. The 2019 data show a decrease in overall waiver rates (3.6%) compared to 2018 (3.8%). The current waiver rate is 25.0% lower than in 2014, with almost 6,000 fewer waivers each year compared to the over 20,000 waivers reported in schools in 2014. Additional information on waiver and completion rates are outlined below.

Michigan's Waiver Rates from 2007 to 2019

From 2007 to 2019, Michigan's overall waiver rate has ranged from 3.1% in 2015 following the educational requirement to 8.6% in 2010 following the addition of new vaccines to the school requirements (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Percentage of Children in Michigan Schools with an Immunization Waiver by Required Reporting Period, 2007-2019

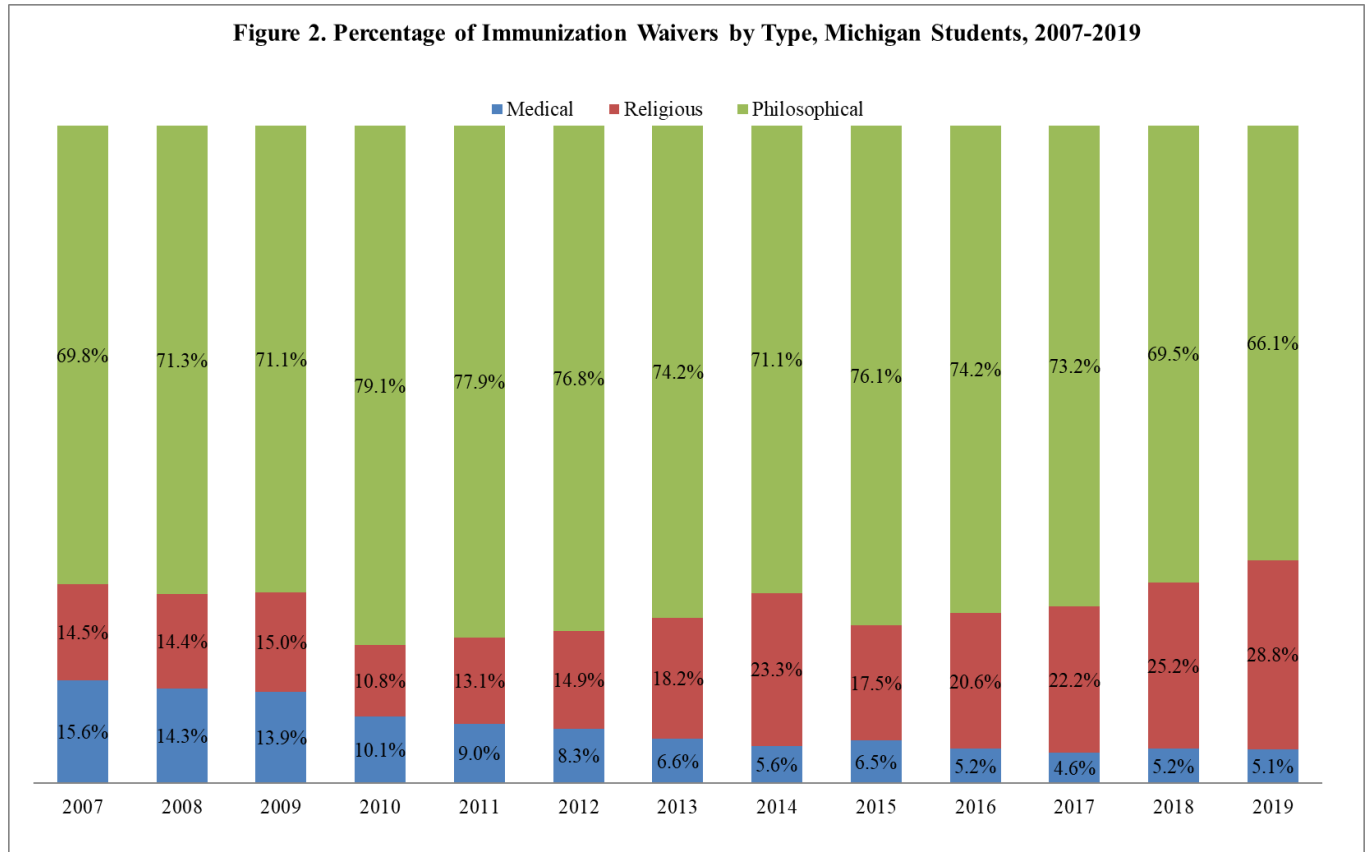


	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Kindergarten	3.7%	4.2%	4.4%	5.7%	5.6%	5.9%	5.9%	5.3%	3.6%	3.7%	4.2%	4.5%	4.4%
6th/7th**	2.2%	2.1%	2.2%	10.6%	8.4%	7.9%	7.8%	4.8%	3.1%	3.2%	3.4%	3.4%	3.2%
New Entrants	3.5%	3.4%	3.5%	9.1%	7.0%	6.0%	5.7%	4.5%	2.8%	2.9%	3.3%	3.5%	3.3%
Total^	3.2%	3.3%	3.4%	8.6%	7.0%	6.5%	6.3%	4.8%	3.1%	3.2%	3.6%	3.8%	3.6%

** In 2012 a Senate Bill was passed to move the sixth grade assessment to seventh grade.
 ^ Total is the combination of Kindergarten, 6/7th grade, and new entrants to the school district.

Immunization Status of School Children in Michigan, 2019

In Michigan, parents or guardians can obtain medical, religious, or philosophical waivers. From 2007 through 2019 most immunization waivers in Michigan have been philosophical; the percentage of waivers that are religious have increased over the last five years (Figure 2). Of the total 2019 waivers in Michigan students, 66.1% were philosophical, 28.8% were religious, and 5.1% were medical.



Immunization Waiver Summaries by Reporting Grades, 2019 Data

Table 1 displays the immunization status of Michigan’s kindergarteners, seventh graders, and new entrants to a school district in 2019 in public and private schools. Completion rates are higher in public schools (kindergarten: 93.4%, seventh: 94.3%, new entrants: 94.3%) compared to private schools (89.0%, 88.2%, and 89.0%) and waiver rates are higher in private schools (8.5%, 5.6%, and 6.0%) compared to public schools (4.1%, 3.1%, and 3.1%). Table 2 displays the overall (kindergarten, 7th grade and new entrants combined) immunization status in public and private schools; similar trends are seen in the overall data. Immunization waiver and completion rates by school building are available on the [MDHHS website](#).

Immunization Status of School Children in Michigan, 2019

Table 1. Immunization status of Michigan students in 2019 by reporting grade and school type.

	Kindergarten			Seventh Grade			New Entrants		
	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total
Number of reporting schools	1,631	535	2,166	1,111	500	1,611	3,188	639	3,827
Number of students	110,888	9,696	120,584	108,583	7,479	116,062	142,848	11,273	154,121
Number of students complete	103,548	8,631	112,179	102,404	6,596	109,000	134,725	10,036	144,761
% complete	93.4%	89.0%	93.0%	94.3%	88.2%	93.9%	94.3%	89.0%	93.9%
Total immunization waivers	4,502	821	5,323	3,326	416	3,742	4,358	682	5,040
% total waivers	4.1%	8.5%	4.4%	3.1%	5.6%	3.2%	3.1%	6.0%	3.3%
Medical waivers	247	43	290	182	28	210	188	35	223
% medical waivers	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%
Religious waivers	1,290	230	1,520	865	126	991	1,365	182	1,547
% religious waivers	1.2%	2.4%	1.3%	0.8%	1.7%	0.9%	1.0%	1.6%	1.0%
Philosophical waivers	2,965	548	3,513	2,279	262	2,541	2,805	465	3,270
% philosophical waivers	2.7%	5.7%	2.9%	2.1%	3.5%	2.2%	2.0%	4.1%	2.1%

Table 2. Immunization status of Michigan students in 2019 by school type.

	Public	Private	Total
Number of reporting schools	5,930	1,674	7,604
Number of students	362,319	28,448	390,767
Number of students complete	340,677	25,263	365,940
% complete	94.0%	88.8%	93.6%
Total immunization waivers	12,186	1,919	14,105
% total waivers	3.4%	6.7%	3.6%
Medical waivers	617	106	723
% medical waivers	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%
Religious waivers	3,520	538	4,058
% religious waivers	1.0%	1.9%	1.0%
Philosophical waivers	8,049	1,275	9,324
% philosophical waivers	2.2%	4.5%	2.4%