

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 school settings and other places where children congregate, a high percentage of children must be immunized.

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

- 1978: Michigan law requires that 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 7<sup>th</sup> grade (6<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> highest waiver rate for kindergarteners [compared](#) to other US states. However, following the new educational requirement, there was a 35% decrease in the overall waiver rates from 2014 (4.8%) to 2015 (3.1%). The change in waiver rates for Kindergartners, 7<sup>th</sup> graders and new entrants are outlined below.

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

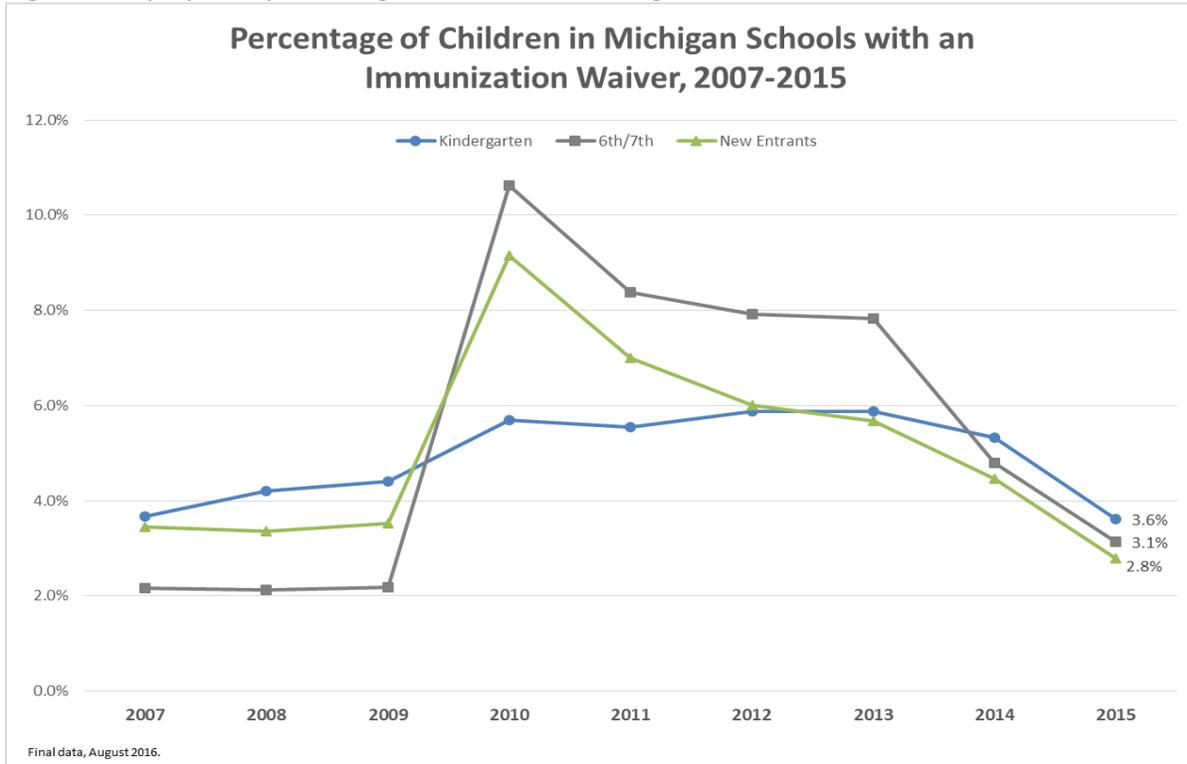
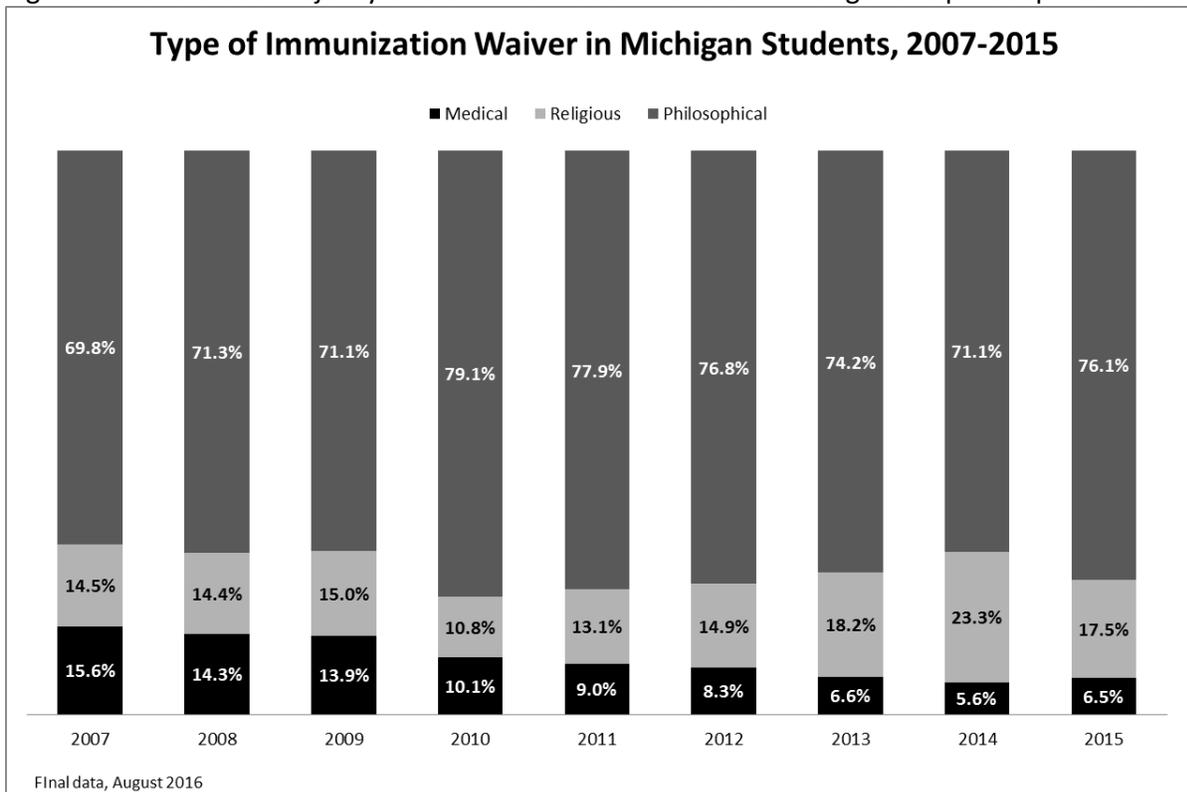


Figure 2 shows that a majority of the immunization waivers in Michigan are philosophical waivers.



### **Summary of Kindergarten Students**

Table 1 displays the immunization status of kindergarten children in 2014 and 2015. Overall immunization waivers for kindergarten students decreased by 32.1%, from 5.3% of children with a waiver in 2014 to 3.62% in 2015. The percentage of children with an immunization waiver was higher in private schools (7.45%) than public schools (3.27%) in 2015.

Table 1: Kindergarten Immunization Assessment, 2014-2015.

	2014			2015		
	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private
<b>Number of reporting schools</b>	2,283	1,678	605	2,183	1,619	564
<b>Number of students</b>	117,993	108,563	9,430	116,213	106,682	9,531
<b>Number of students complete</b>	108,642	100,518	8,124	108,929	100,478	8,451
<b>% complete</b>	92.10%	92.60%	86.20%	93.73%	94.18%	88.67%
<b>Total immunization waivers</b>	6,276	5,311	965	4,203	3,493	710
<b>% total waivers</b>	5.30%	4.90%	10.20%	3.62%	3.27%	7.45%
<b>Medical waivers</b>	389	333	56	246	207	39
<b>% medical waivers</b>	0.30%	0.30%	0.60%	0.21%	0.19%	0.41%
<b>Religious waivers</b>	1,392	1,183	209	748	598	150
<b>% religious waivers</b>	1.20%	1.10%	2.20%	0.64%	0.56%	1.57%
<b>Philosophical waivers</b>	4,495	3,795	700	3,209	2,688	521
<b>% philosophical waivers</b>	3.80%	3.50%	7.40%	2.76%	2.52%	5.47%

### **Summary of Seventh Grade Students**

Table 2 displays the immunization status of 7<sup>th</sup> graders in 2014 and 2015. The percentage of students completing recommended vaccinations increased from 93.1% in 2014 to 94.41% in 2015. Immunization waivers decreased by 35.4% from 4.8% in 2014 to 3.13% in 2015.

Table 2: 7th Grade Immunization Assessment, 2014-2015.

	2014			2015		
	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private
<b>Number of reporting schools</b>	1,517	1,032	485	1,580	1,086	494
<b>Number of students</b>	114,673	107,766	6,907	114,639	107,125	7,514
<b>Number of students complete</b>	106,764	100,721	6,043	108,225	101,506	6,719
<b>% complete</b>	93.10%	93.50%	87.50%	94.41%	94.75%	89.42%
<b>Total immunization waivers</b>	5,505	4,922	583	3,591	3,184	407
<b>% total waivers</b>	4.80%	4.60%	8.40%	3.13%	2.97%	5.42%
<b>Medical waivers</b>	308	278	30	268	244	24
<b>% medical waivers</b>	0.30%	0.30%	0.40%	0.23%	0.23%	0.32%
<b>Religious waivers</b>	1,265	1,113	152	516	442	73
<b>% religious waivers</b>	1.10%	1.00%	2.20%	0.45%	0.41%	0.97%
<b>Philosophical waivers</b>	3,932	3,531	401	2,808	2,498	310
<b>% philosophical waivers</b>	3.40%	3.30%	5.80%	2.45%	2.33%	4.13%

### Summary of New Entrants to the School District

Table 3 displays the immunization status of new entrants in 2014 and 2015 (when students enter a new school district, their immunization status is assessed to ensure all current vaccination requirements are met). From 2014 to 2015, the percentage of new entrants with an immunization waiver decreased by 37.8% from 4.5% to 2.79%.

Table 3. Immunization Assessment of New School Entrants, 2014-2015.

	2014			2015		
	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private
<b>Number of reporting schools</b>	3,973	3,310	663	3,861	3,213	648
<b>Number of students</b>	196,398	180,951	15,447	182,814	168,380	14,315
<b>Number of students complete</b>	182,452	168,734	13,718	172,532	159,575	12,888
<b>% complete</b>	92.90%	93.20%	88.80%	94.38%	94.77%	90.03%
<b>Total immunization waivers</b>	8,763	7,595	1,168	5,106	4,321	772
<b>% total waivers</b>	4.50%	4.20%	7.60%	2.79%	2.57%	5.39%
<b>Medical waivers</b>	450	369	81	321	272	49
<b>% medical waivers</b>	0.20%	0.20%	0.50%	0.18%	0.16%	0.34%
<b>Religious waivers</b>	2,198	1,906	292	988	832	152
<b>% religious waivers</b>	1.10%	1.10%	1.90%	0.54%	0.49%	1.06%
<b>Philosophical waivers</b>	6,115	5,320	795	3,797	3,217	571
<b>% philosophical waivers</b>	3.10%	2.90%	5.10%	2.08%	1.91%	3.99%