

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, 7<sup>th</sup> grade (6<sup>th</sup> 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 final 2017 data show an increase in overall waiver rates (3.6%) compared to last year (3.2%). However, the current waiver rate is still 25.0% lower than 2014, with at least 6,000 fewer waivers each year compared to the over 20,000 waivers reported in schools in 2014. The waiver rates for kindergartners, 7<sup>th</sup> graders and new entrants to a school district are outlined below.

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

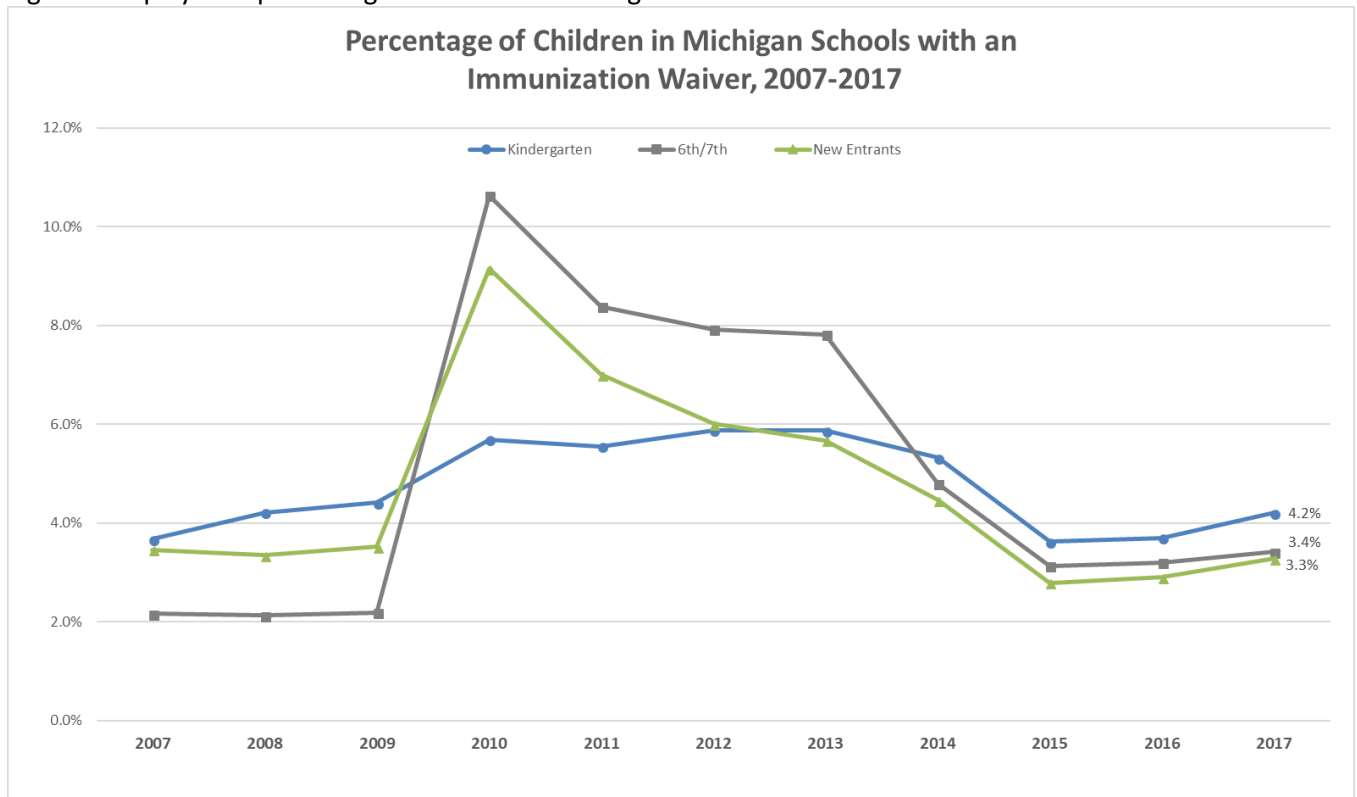
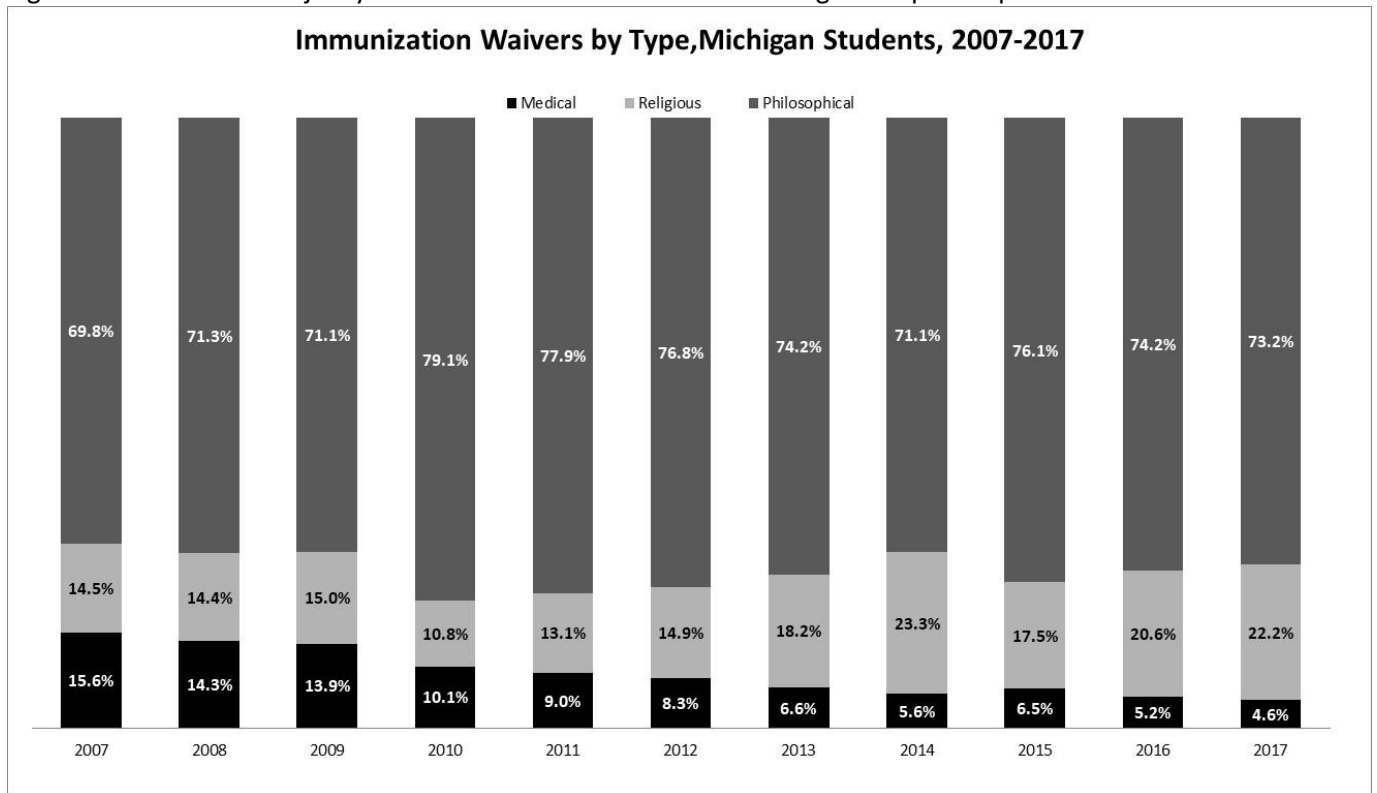


Figure 2 shows that a majority of the immunization waivers in Michigan are philosophical waivers.



**Summary of Kindergarten Students**

Table 1 displays the immunization status of Michigan’s kindergarteners in 2016 and 2017 in public and private schools. A student is considered “complete” if they have received the school required immunizations or are waiting the appropriate time interval to receive the next dose in a vaccine series. Overall immunization waivers for kindergarten students increased from 3.66% of children with a waiver in 2016 to 4.20% in 2017. While there was an increase, the 2017 waiver rate is a 20.8% 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 (7.91%) than public schools (3.88%).

Table 1: Kindergarten Immunization Assessment, 2016-2017.

	2016			2017		
	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private
<b>NUMBER OF REPORTING SCHOOLS</b>	1,941	1,531	410	1,926	1,520	406
<b>NUMBER OF STUDENTS</b>	118,853	109,182	9,671	119,029	109,522	9,507
<b>NUMBER OF STUDENTS COMPLETE</b>	111,437	102,799	8,638	111,093	102,600	8,493
<b>% COMPLETE</b>	93.76%	94.15%	89.32%	93.33%	93.68%	89.33%
<b>TOTAL IMMUNIZATION WAIVERS</b>	4,347	3,614	733	5,005	4,253	752
<b>% TOTAL WAIVERS</b>	3.66%	3.31%	7.58%	4.20%	3.88%	7.91%
<b>MEDICAL WAIVERS</b>	213	188	25	251	224	27
<b>% MEDICAL WAIVERS</b>	0.18%	0.17%	0.26%	0.21%	0.20%	0.28%
<b>RELIGIOUS WAIVERS</b>	872	705	167	1,095	914	181
<b>% RELIGIOUS WAIVERS</b>	0.73%	0.65%	1.73%	0.92%	0.83%	1.90%
<b>PHILOSOPHICAL WAIVERS</b>	3,262	2,721	541	3,659	3,115	544
<b>% PHILOSOPHICAL WAIVERS</b>	2.74%	2.49%	5.59%	3.07%	2.84%	5.72%

**Summary of Seventh Grade Students**

Table 2 displays the immunization status of 7<sup>th</sup> graders in 2016 and 2017. There were more students complete in public schools (94.26%) than private schools (89.93%). Immunization waivers slightly increased from 3.19% in 2016 to 3.42% in 2017. The current waiver rate is a 29.2% decrease from the 2014 waiver rate.

Table 2: 7th Grade Immunization Assessment, 2016-2017.

	2016			2017		
	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private
<b>NUMBER OF REPORTING SCHOOLS</b>	1,241	950	291	1,240	948	292
<b>NUMBER OF STUDENTS</b>	117,305	109,830	7,475	113,569	106,344	7,225
<b>NUMBER OF STUDENTS COMPLETE</b>	110,535	103,872	6,663	106,664	100,239	6,425
<b>% COMPLETE</b>	94.23%	94.58%	89.14%	93.92%	94.26%	88.93%
<b>TOTAL IMMUNIZATION WAIVERS</b>	3,738	3,328	410	3,882	3,461	421
<b>% TOTAL WAIVERS</b>	3.19%	3.03%	5.48%	3.42%	3.25%	5.83%
<b>MEDICAL WAIVERS</b>	231	214	17	188	176	12
<b>% MEDICAL WAIVERS</b>	0.20%	0.19%	0.23%	0.17%	0.17%	0.17%
<b>RELIGIOUS WAIVERS</b>	694	608	86	793	710	83
<b>% RELIGIOUS WAIVERS</b>	0.59%	0.55%	1.15%	0.70%	0.67%	1.15%
<b>PHILOSOPHICAL WAIVERS</b>	2,813	2,506	307	2,901	2,575	326
<b>% PHILOSOPHICAL WAIVERS</b>	2.40%	2.28%	4.11%	2.55%	2.42%	4.51%

### Summary of New Entrants to the School District

Table 3 displays the immunization status of new entrants in 2016 and 2017 (when students enter a new school district, their immunization status is assessed to ensure all current vaccination requirements are met). From 2016 to 2017, the percentage of new entrants with a waiver increased from 2.87% to 3.27%. The current rate is a 26.7% decrease from the 2014 waiver rate.

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

	2016			2017		
	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private
<b>NUMBER OF REPORTING SCHOOLS</b>	3,460	3,042	418	3,415	3,006	409
<b>NUMBER OF STUDENTS</b>	178,416	163,271	15,145	167,341	154,969	12,372
<b>NUMBER OF STUDENTS COMPLETE</b>	167,615	153,931	13,684	157,538	146,464	11,074
<b>% COMPLETE</b>	93.95%	94.28%	90.35%	94.14%	94.51%	89.51%
<b>TOTAL IMMUNIZATION WAIVERS</b>	5,122	4,327	795	5,478	4,704	774
<b>% TOTAL WAIVERS</b>	2.87%	2.65%	5.25%	3.27%	3.04%	6.26%
<b>MEDICAL WAIVERS</b>	241	212	29	224	196	28
<b>% MEDICAL WAIVERS</b>	0.14%	0.13%	0.19%	0.13%	0.13%	0.23%
<b>RELIGIOUS WAIVERS</b>	1,155	977	178	1,299	1,126	173
<b>% RELIGIOUS WAIVERS</b>	0.65%	0.60%	1.18%	0.78%	0.73%	1.40%
<b>PHILOSOPHICAL WAIVERS</b>	3,726	3,138	588	3,955	3,382	573
<b>% PHILOSOPHICAL WAIVERS</b>	2.09%	1.92%	3.88%	2.36%	2.18%	4.63%