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Michigan releases virtual town hall discussion about COVID-19 vaccine for people with disabilities

Discussion focused on accessibility and vaccine safety

LANSING, Mich. – Recognizing that Michigan residents have questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, the State of Michigan is releasing the next in a series of community town halls focused on concerns of people with disabilities and their caregivers. The event can be viewed at [Facebook.com/MichiganHHS](https://www.facebook.com/MichiganHHS).

As equity has always been a focus in vaccine outreach, this event was pre-recorded so that it could be captioned to ensure it is as accessible as possible. This builds upon virtual conversations held with [faith-based leaders](#), [communities of color](#), [older adults](#), and [first ladies in the faith community](#), about the safety, efficacy and importance of the COVID-19 vaccines for safely reopening Michigan. Michigan will continue to host additional town halls in partnership with public health and community leaders.

“I am pleased with our efforts to expand access to these safe and effective vaccines, through mass vaccination sites and ongoing efforts to make these vaccines accessible to people in neighborhoods through mobile efforts and community partnerships,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). “Equitable access to vaccines is important, and we want people with disabilities and their caregivers to be able to have their questions answered, and barriers to access removed.”

Joining Dr. Khaldun for this discussion was:

- Matt Bolger, Michigan State Police, parent of a child with a disability
- Brian Calley, Small Business Association of Michigan, parent of a child with a disability
- Julie Conn, speech pathologist with Huron Valley Schools, parent of an adult child with an intellectual disability
- Tim Hileman, Special Olympics Michigan and Protect Michigan Commission Disability Workgroup chair
- Lucia Rios, Lakeshore Disability Network

In order to reach community-wide immunity that can protect others who cannot get vaccinated, at least 70% of Americans need to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Over 4 million Michiganders, or 50.9%, have received at least their first dose of the safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine. The goal of the town hall series is to address the safety and efficacy of the vaccine by answering questions within vulnerable communities, including people with disabilities who face unique challenges in accessing the vaccine.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/Coronavirus). To learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine, visit [Michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine](https://www.michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine).

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