



MEDIA ADVISORY

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

Contact: Mike Nowlin

Cell: 989-450-0855

Gov. Whitmer's Protect Michigan Commission joins with local health experts to host Upper Peninsula COVID-19 virtual press conference Thursday afternoon

Online event will highlight regional strategies for getting more shots in arms among youth, Native Americans and Yoopers, as well as introduce the U.P.'s new COVID-19 student ambassador volunteer

WHEN: 2:00 p.m. Thursday, April 15, 2021 | Media Q&A will follow

WHERE: Available to credentialed news media **LIVE** via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89739375515?pwd=dzAwc0k0cGFCaU83Mk9RREh6QUpmZz09>

For those who cannot attend, the event will be posted afterward on the Michigan Dept. Of Health and Human Services Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/michiganhhs/>

WHO: Protect Michigan Commission (PMC) Director **Kerry Ebersole Singh**
Nick Derusha, president of the Michigan Association of Local Public Health (MALPH) and the Health Officer for the Luce-Mackinac-Alger-Schoolcraft (LMAS) District Health Department
Bay Mills Indian Community Executive Council President **Whitney Gravelle**
Upper Peninsula Health Plan Director of Population Health **Janey Joffee**
Amber Brittain, Emergency Department RN, UP Health System - Marquette
Jillian Skewis, 18, a senior at Negaunee High School who has volunteered to serve as one of the state's new Protect Michigan Commission COVID-19 student ambassadors with the aim of encouraging her peers to get vaccinated

WHAT: **Virtual press conference where PMC Director Ebersole Singh and healthcare experts from the Upper Peninsula** will provide new regional COVID-19 vaccination data updates and share their respective strategies for getting more shots in arms of key target audiences moving forward, including but not limited to youth, Native Americans and those who have concerns about the benefits of getting vaccinated.

In addition, Ebersole Singh will introduce **Jillian Skewis**, an Upper Peninsula teenager who plans to study nursing at Northern Michigan University and has volunteered to serve as one of the state's new Protect Michigan Commission

COVID-19 student ambassadors. The teens are urging their peers to get vaccinated and continue to practice preventative measures such as properly wearing masks, social distancing and frequent handwashing to reduce the spread of the virus until the vast majority of people have been vaccinated.

Individuals 16 and 17 years of age must receive the Pfizer vaccine only. Moderna and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines are only recommended for those 18 years and older. Minors ages 16 and 17 will need a parent or legal guardian to accompany them to their appointment in order to provide consent to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. In some counties, the parent or legal guardian may be able to provide consent through a note or a phone call that has been verified by two nurses. Check with the vaccine provider first to see if this is an option where you live.

INFO: Gov. Whitmer created the [Protect Michigan Commission](#) in January. The appointees represent a diverse array of industries, professions and backgrounds. Housed within MDHHS, they are charged with helping to ensure every Michigander has a plan to get vaccinated against COVID-19 once the opportunity becomes available. Their goal is facilitating at least 100,000 shots in arms daily. The most recent [vaccine prioritization guidelines](#) can be found on [Michigan's COVID-19 website](#).