MDHHS launches new text messaging program to encourage COVID-19 vaccination

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and the Protect Michigan Commission are launching a new text messaging program to share COVID-19 vaccine information and encourage Michiganders to get vaccinated.

The text messaging program will reach 1 million people in counties across Michigan, with a focus on high vulnerability communities and areas with low COVID-19 vaccination coverage.

The text messages, which will begin tomorrow, will ask individuals about their plans around COVID-19 vaccination and then link people to vaccination sites in their area or direct them to sources for more information. The first message will clearly identify the sender as "the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services." People have the option to opt out by replying "STOP" to any of the messages at any time.

"We are reaching out to people through a variety of channels to make sure they have the access and information they need to protect themselves from COVID-19 with this safe and effective vaccine," said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health with MDHHS. "It's going to take all of us working within our own family and friend networks, answering questions and providing support to help get more of us vaccinated so we can get back to normal."

More than 3.8 million Michiganders are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (45.2% of residents), and more than 4.5 million have received at least one dose. More than 8.1 million doses have been administered as of May 24. The state's goal remains to vaccinate 70% of people 16 and older as quickly as possible.

Michiganders can find vaccines near them by texting their zip code to 438829 or calling 211.

Michigan residents seeking more information about the COVID-19 vaccine can visit **Michigan.gov/COVIDvaccine**. Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at **Michigan.gov/Coronavirus** and **CDC.gov/Coronavirus**.

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