

Immunization Status of School Children in Michigan, 2020

Key Points

- In Michigan, there was a decrease in overall immunization waiver rates in 2020 compared to 2019 in the grades with reporting requirements:
 - Kindergarten: 3.7% compared to 4.4%
 - Seventh grade: Remained the same at 3.2%
 - New entrants to a school district: 3.2% compared to 3.3%
 - Overall (kindergarten, 7th grade and new entrants combined): 3.4% compared to 3.6%
- In 2014 an educational requirement was added to the waiver process and there was a 35% decrease in the overall waiver rates, from 4.8% in 2014 to 3.1% in 2015.
 - There were slight increases in overall waiver rates in 2016 (3.2%), 2017 (3.6%), and 2018 (3.8%).
 - The 2020 overall waiver rate is 29% lower than in 2014, with about 11000 waivers reported compared to the over 25,000 waivers reported in schools in 2014.
 - Compared to 2014, the 2020 kindergarten waiver rate has decreased by 30%, the seventh-grade rate has decreased by 33.3%, and the new entrant rate has decreased by 28.9%.

History of Immunization Waivers in Michigan

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 in schools and other 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 to kindergarten or a new school district involving grades 1-12, possess a certificate of immunization at registration or not later than the first day of school.
- 2000: *Public Act 89* mandated an immunization assessment for each sixth-grade student.
- 2010: requirements for receipt of additional vaccines were added.
- 2012: Senate Bills 237, 238, and 239 moved the sixth-grade assessment to seventh grade.
- 2014: new educational requirement for Michigan parents opting their children out of getting vaccinated before entering school.

Current Requirements in Michigan Schools

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 has 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 the child is precluded from receiving the vaccine(s).

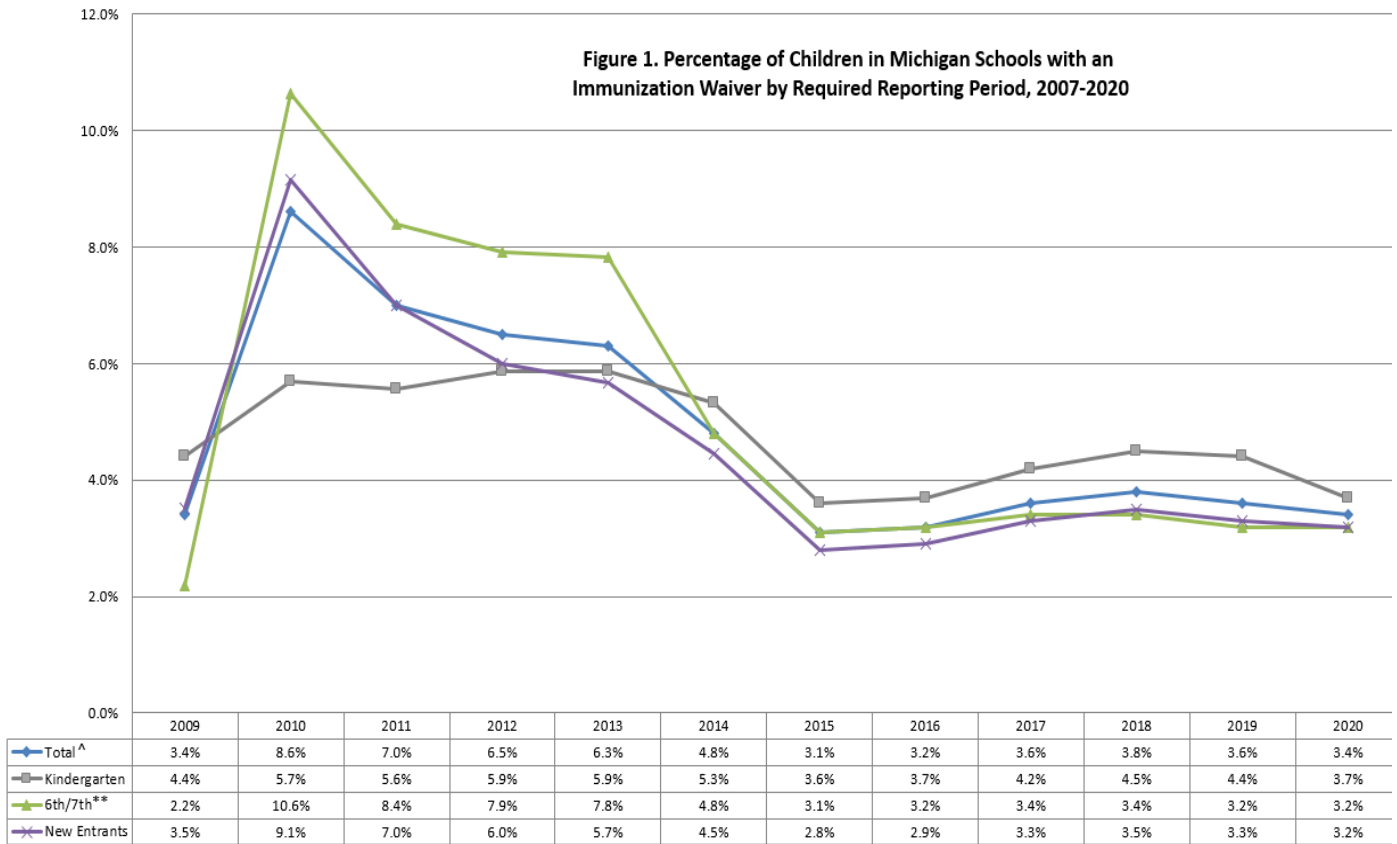
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- 2) The parent or guardian holds religious or philosophical beliefs which preclude receipt of a vaccination(s). Any parent/guardian who wants to claim a nonmedical waiver will need to receive education regarding the benefits of vaccination and the risks of disease from a local health department (LHD) before obtaining the certified nonmedical waiver form through the LHD. 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, 7th grade (6th 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 2020 data show the overall waiver rates (3.4%) were 0.2% lower as compared to 2019 (3.6%). The current waiver rate is 29.0% lower than in 2014, with only 11,372 waivers reported in 2020 compared to the over 20,000 waivers reported in schools in 2014. Additional information on waiver and completion rates are outlined below.

Michigan's Waiver Rates from 2007 to 2020

From 2007 to 2020, Michigan's overall waiver rate has ranged from 8.6% in 2010 following the addition of new vaccines to the school requirements to 3.1% in 2015 following the educational requirement (Figure 1).

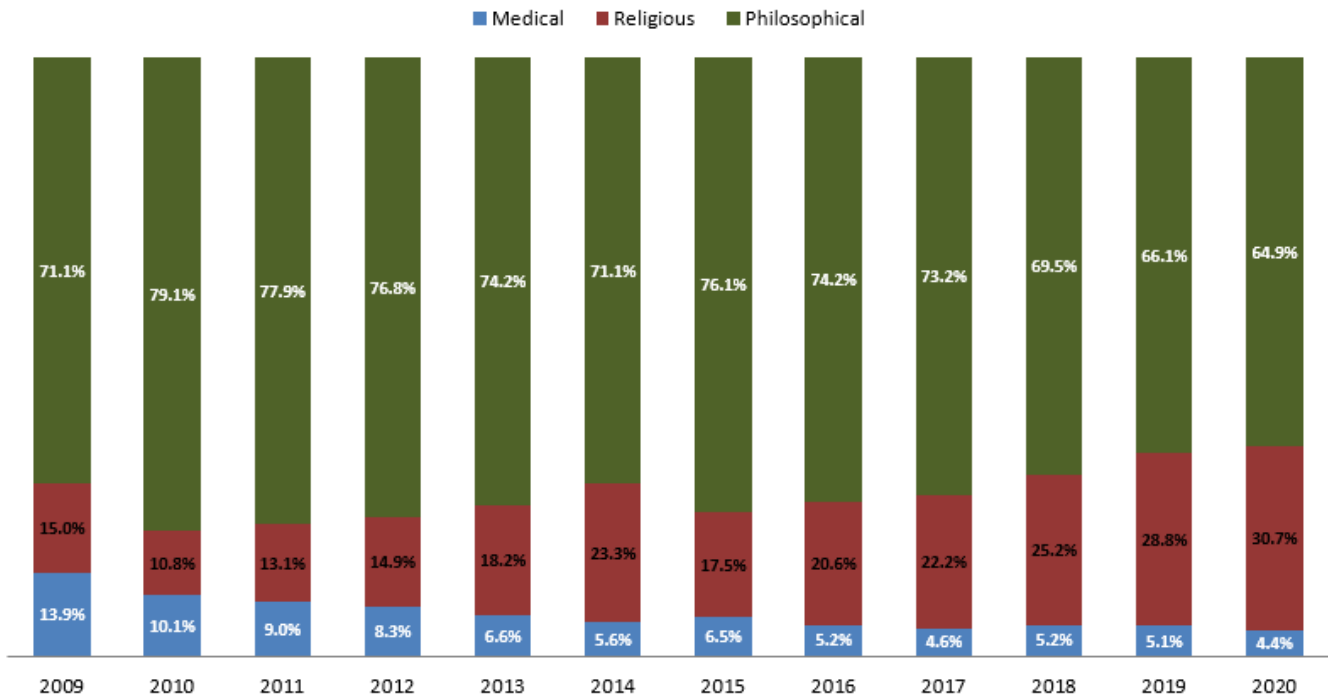


**In 2012 a Senate Bill was passed to move the sixth grade assessment to seventh grade.
 ^Total is the combination of Kindergarten, 6/7th grade, and new entrants to the school district

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In Michigan, parents or guardians can obtain medical, religious, or philosophical waivers. From 2007 through 2020, most immunization waivers in Michigan have been philosophical; the percentage of waivers that are religious have increased over the last five years (Figure 2). Of the total 2020 waivers in Michigan students, 64.9% were philosophical, 30.7% were religious, and 4.4% were medical.

Figure 2. Percentage of Immunization Waivers by Type in Michigan Students, 2007-2020



Immunization Waiver Summaries by Reporting Grades, 2020 Data

Table 1 displays the immunization status of Michigan’s kindergarteners, seventh graders, and new entrants to a school district in 2020 in public and private schools. Completion rates are higher in public schools (kindergarten: 93.4%, seventh: 91.4%, new entrants: 94.3%) compared to private schools (90.6%, 88.1%, and 90.4%) and waiver rates are higher in private schools (6.6%, 5.3%, and 5.2%) compared to public schools (3.4%, 3.0%, and 3.0%). Table 2 displays the overall (kindergarten, 7th grade and new entrants combined) immunization status in public and private schools; similar trends are seen in the overall data. Immunization waiver and completion rates by school building are available on the [MDHHS website](#).

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Table 1. Immunization status of Michigan students in 2020 by reporting grade and school type.

	Kindergarten			Seventh Grade			New Entrants		
	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total
Number of reporting schools	1,703	599	2,302	1,130	552	1,682	3,306	703	4,009
Number of students	97,066	9,528	106,594	100,765	6,994	107,759	109,921	14,119	124,040
Number of students complete	90,660	8,637	99,297	92,132	6,160	98,292	103,674	12,766	116,440
% Complete	93.4%	90.6%	93.2%	91.4%	88.1%	91.2%	94.3%	90.4%	93.9%
Total immunization waivers	3,311	626	3,937	3,068	374	3,442	3,260	733	3,993
% Total waivers	3.4%	6.6%	3.7%	3.0%	5.3%	3.2%	3.0%	5.2%	3.2%
Medical waivers	195	22	217	171	24	195	181	28	209
% Medical waivers	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Religious waivers	989	213	1,202	826	108	934	1,068	258	1,326
% Religious waivers	1.0%	2.2%	1.1%	0.8%	1.5%	0.9%	1.0%	1.8%	1.1%
Philosophical waivers	2,127	391	2,518	2,071	242	2,313	2,011	447	2,458
% Philosophical waivers	2.2%	4.1%	2.4%	2.1%	3.5%	2.1%	1.8%	3.2%	2.0%

Table 2. Immunization status of Michigan students in 2020 by school type.

	Public	Private	Total
Number of reporting schools	6,139	1,854	7,993
Number of students	307,752	30,641	338,393
Number of students complete	286,466	27,563	314,029
% complete	93.1%	90.0%	92.8%
Total immunization waivers	9,639	1,733	11,372
% total waivers	3.1%	5.7%	3.4%
Medical waivers	547	74	621
% medical waivers	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Religious waivers	2,883	579	3,462
% religious waivers	0.9%	1.9%	1.0%
Philosophical waivers	6,209	1,080	7,289
% philosophical waivers	2.0%	3.5%	2.2%