



UPDATES FROM THE CAPITOL

April 24 - May 5, 2023

MDHHS ISSUES COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE

On May 1, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) issued updated guidance related to COVID-19 vaccines as the nation moves towards the end of the federal public health emergency. This comes after the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) amended the emergency use authorizations (EUAs) of the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 bivalent mRNA vaccines.

The guidance from the FDA includes authorizing the bivalent vaccines to be used for all doses administered to those ages 6 months and older. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and FDA are taking steps to simplify COVID-19 vaccination recommendations and schedules for most individuals. The intent is to allow for more flexibility for those who are immunocompromised and high risk.

STATE BEGINS COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER PILOT PROGRAM

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recently announced a pilot program for community health worker (CHW) services at former COVID-19 neighborhood testing sites.

CHWs are trained public health professionals whose goal is to address social determinants of health and improve the well-being of communities. CHWs can refer visitors to providers, help them get health insurance coverage, and provide education on medications, chronic conditions, and healthy lifestyle habits.

CHW pilot sites will be located in Detroit, Flint, and Muskegon. More information can be found [here](#).

WHITMER LEADS LETTER TO CONGRESS ON FEDERAL BUDGET CONVERSATIONS

On April 26, Governor Whitmer led an initiative alongside nine other governors in sending a letter to U.S. congressional leadership expressing their opposition to any efforts to cut programs families rely on as budget negotiations continue in Washington D.C.

Any cuts to these programs would affect millions of Americans and Michigan residents as families rely on programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to feed their children and keep a roof over their head.

The federal budget is currently being negotiated and certain proposals include gutting programs that ensure access to quality health care, childcare, housing, food, and employment. The letter to congressional leadership can be found [here](#).

GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES STAFF UPDATES

On April 28, Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced staffing updates to the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, & Energy (EGLE), as well as other executive office staff updates.

Aaron Keatley, who served as chief deputy director at EGLE, was selected to become the acting director of the department. Keatley was previously responsible for managing and coordinating Michigan's environmental programs. Keatley will hold the position as acting director until Whitmer announces a permanent placement in the coming weeks. This comes after former director Dan Eichinger announced he was taking a new opportunity outside of the department.

In the executive office, a handful of individuals have new positions:

- Emily Paski is joining the governor's legal team as the Tribal Liaison and Associate Counsel
- Dan Osher will join the legal team as Deputy Legal Counsel
- Alex Thibodeau will serve as the Director of Appointments
- Nate Engle was promoted to Director of the Office of Community Engagement
- Amanda Youssef was promoted to Director of Constituent Services