

TO: St Catherine Community and other interested individuals
FROM: Paula White, RN-BC, Parish Nurse; (269) 330 3762
Date: January 14, 2021

COVID-19 Vaccine Update

Today I attended a conference call with the **Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services Staff** regarding **COVID-19 Vaccine distribution**.

As of this morning, the county has received 6,825 doses of vaccine and has an inventory of 3,245 doses. There are clinics scheduled to distribute these doses. Some folks are now eligible for their second dose of vaccine and will receive it on schedule at the clinics. New shipments of vaccine are arriving weekly. It is expected that larger amounts will be arriving in coming weeks.

NOTE: ALL VACCINE CLINICS ARE BY APPOINTMENT ONLY!!!

Currently the county is completing vaccination of folks in priority **1A**. This includes people with direct contact with patients, first responders, and individuals 75 years old and older as well as those in the 185 licensed senior/congregate living facilities.

The county is preparing to vaccinate those in priority **1B** as soon as the **1A** group is completed. The **1B** group includes all those 65 years old and older as well as frontline and essential workers (schools, groceries, etc.). There are approximately 60,000 people in the county who fall into the **1B** over 65 category. It will take a while to work through this group. **PLEASE BE PATIENT.**

HOW TO GET 'IN LINE' FOR A VACCINE:

1. For groups **1A** and **1B** there are forms to be completed by to get into the queue for vaccination. These may be completed online by going to the Health Department website for COVID-19 vaccine (link below). Note that the **1A** and **1B** groups have a form for group enrollment through an employer or organizational or congregate setting. There are also outreach teams who will be in contact with hard-to-reach high risk individuals including the homeless and seniors living independently.

Additionally, for individuals 65 years and older in **1B**, there is a form for an individual to complete online (link below). If you know of anyone in this group who does not have access to the online form, you may complete it for them. This form went online on January 11th and already 11,000 people have registered. For those 16-64 in group **1C** registration is not yet open. Check back to the county's vaccine website in the coming month for your opportunity to register.

2. Once your group or you as an individual have registered, the Health Department staff is reviewing the forms, prioritizing, and then will be reaching out to schedule groups and individuals as vaccine and appointments are available. Again, be patient.
3. You will be contacted to schedule your appointment for the vaccine. You will need to bring your ID (personal ID and/or employer group ID). At this appointment you will receive a card with the date for your 2nd dose of vaccine. Expect to be asked to wait 15-30 minutes after the vaccination to be observed for side effects (these are rare!). There will be provision for those needing special assistance or translation when you make your appointment.

The Health Department is the coordinating agency and is working with many community partners including our hospitals, universities, national guard and community agencies and organizations. These partnerships will allow 1,000+ people to receive vaccines per clinic day!

If you have a desire to volunteer to assist in these efforts, you may register with the **Michigan Volunteer Registry** (link below). Indicate your desire to serve Kalamazoo County.

Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services COVID
<https://www.kalcounty.com/hcs/covid19.php>

Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services COVID vaccine
<https://www.kalcounty.com/hcs/covid19vaccine.php>

Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services Facebook page for COVID
<https://www.facebook.com/KalamazooCountyHCS>

Michigan Volunteer Registry – indicate you want to serve in Kalamazoo County
<http://bit.ly/MIVolunteerCovid19>

State of Michigan COVID information website:
<https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus>

To contact the **Health Department** by phone call **(269) 373-5200**.

Note: They are experiencing high call volume during this time.

Both local hospitals have a COVID vaccine banner on their home webpage. They may also have appointments available at times. Keep checking. For Bronson you must have a MyChart account to register for a vaccine clinic. Directions for creating a MyChart account are on the site. Links to hospital websites:

<https://www.bronsonhealth.com>

<https://www.borgess.com>

Medicare Coverage

Medicare Part B will cover the FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccination at no cost to beneficiaries. This vaccination is **not** subject to the Part B deductible and there is **\$0** copayment.

COVID-19 Scams

You are advised to be alert for scammers. If anyone asks a beneficiary to share their Medicare Number or to pay for access to the vaccine, you can bet it's a scam.

Here's what to know:

- Medicare Beneficiaries can't pay to put their name on a list to get the vaccine.
- Medicare Beneficiaries can't pay to get early access to a vaccine.
- Don't share personal or financial information if someone calls, texts, or emails promising access to the vaccine for a fee.

If you have any other questions, please contact the **Health Department** at **(269) 373-5200** or I will be happy to help with any questions if I can. Thank you.

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Update: January 24, 2021

COVID-19 VACCINE

I know some of you have gotten your first vaccine, but many more of us are waiting. COVID-19 Vaccine is now being made available to people 65 years and older. **YOU MUST HAVE AN APPOINTMENT!!!** There are no walk-ins being taken.

In recent days there have been about 1,000 vaccines administered per business day in Kalamazoo County. I am sure you have heard news about vaccine distribution. Kalamazoo County is working with the State of Michigan to obtain our allocations of vaccine. As the supply of vaccine becomes more abundant, more appointments will be made available.

There are 60,000 people over 65 years of age in Kalamazoo County. It will take a while to get two doses of vaccine to all of us. Please be patient! If you know of someone without internet access, they may call the Health Department to register (269 373 5200 option 1), OR family or friends may go online to register them.

I am including an article from today's Kalamazoo Gazette which summarizes the current status of COVID-19 Vaccines in Kalamazoo County. If you live in another county, contact or go to your county Health Department's website for more information.

Access to the vaccine happens in one of three ways:

1. Through an employer group for those essential workers: Employer groups must register with the Health Department to be scheduled.
2. Through registration on the **Health Department's** website (links below in the article) or: <https://www.kalcounty.com/hcs/covid19vaccine.php>. Step 1 is to fill out the pre-registration form to get on the waiting list.
3. Through one of the local health systems:
 - Through **Family Health Center** for those who are currently affiliated with the Center. Appointments may be made by calling the Center at. 269 349 2641. You may also get information through your MyChart account with Family Health Center. <https://www.fhckzoo.com>
 - Through **Ascension Borgess**: The hospital is reaching out to patients personally to schedule appointments. There is a COVID-19 banner at the top of the hospital's home page which will lead you to more information. Be sure that your medical record has your current contact info. <https://healthcare.ascension.org/Locations/Michigan/MIKAL/Kalamazoo-Ascension-Borgess-Hospital>

- Through **Bronson Healthcare**. Bronson is also reaching out to patients and is making appointments available online as vaccine is available. If you have a Bronson myChart account, you may be able to make an appointment online. Currently (1/24/21), there are no open appointments. Check the hospital website, click the COVID-19 Vaccine banner on the home page OR Sign into your myChart account. If you do not have a myChart account there are instructions for how to go about creating one. Again be sure that your medical record has your current contact information. <https://www.bronsonhealth.com>.

The Health Department website describes the **STEPS TO OBTAIN A VACCINE:**

<https://www.kalcounty.com/hcs/covid19vaccine.php>.

When you go to your appointment for your 1st dose of vaccine, you will be given an appointment for your second dose.

The state of Michigan has published a **VACCINE TIMELINE** describing when each of the priority groups can expect to be vaccinated. It will take time to get to all adults. Please be patient!

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/MI_COVID19_Vaccination_Prioritization_Guidance_710349_7.pdf

The state of Michigan website has all sorts of **COVID-19 INFORMATION** to answer any question you may have including questions about the latest changes to our state's COVID-19 restrictions:

https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178_103214---,00.html

SEASONAL FLU

Seasonal flu is beginning to be seen in very small numbers across the nation. With schools, colleges and some businesses re-opening we may see more cases. If you have not yet received your seasonal flu vaccine it is not too late. Anyone 6 months of age and older is recommended to receive this vaccine. Please contact your physician for recommendations on how to space the seasonal flu vaccine with the COVID-19 vaccine as no additional vaccines are being given with the COVID vaccine.

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS remain in place until we are ALL vaccinated!

Precautions also apply to those who have received vaccine - they may be able to transmit the virus.

- Wear your MASK when in public,
- WASH YOUR HANDS often, and
- MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCE OF 6 FEET OR MORE.

From today's Kalamazoo Gazette:

THE COVID- 19 PANDEMIC

County pre-registers 20,000 seniors for vaccinations

Bronson said all appointments for adults 65 or older currently are filled.

Brad Devereaux bdeverea@mlive.com

KALAMAZOO — In Kalamazoo County, people age 65 and older can pre-register to receive a COVID-19 vaccination, and some have been vaccinated, while others wait for their turn as hospitals and health officials deal with a limited supply.

People 65 and older who live in Kalamazoo County may go online at bit.ly/kzoovaccineform to pre-register for a vaccine appointment on the Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services website, to join the vaccine waiting list, which currently has more than 20,000 people on it, the health department said. People without internet access can call 269-373-5200, and staff at the health department will help them register.

Public Information Officer Matt Johnson gave a brief talk on video last week, outlining the steps to preregister to get a vaccine. Health officials are working to get it distributed quickly, efficiently and equitably, but it is all dependent on the supply, he said. Watch the video at bit.ly/healthvid21.

Bronson Healthcare facilities in Battle Creek, Portage, Mattawan and South Haven on Jan. 16 began administering the vaccine to patients who are age 65 and older. Those locations are:

- › Bronson Fieldstone Center, 165 N. Washington Ave., Battle Creek.
- › Bronson Vaccine Clinic, 6901 Portage Road, Portage. › Bronson Vaccine Clinic, 52375 N. Main St., Mattawan.
- › Bronson Wellness Center, 950 S. Bailey Ave., South Haven.

Bronson said all appointments for adults 65 or older are filled, and the hospital anticipates opening scheduling for new appointments no sooner than Monday. There is no waiting list, Bronson said. Patients 65 and older can go to bit.ly/kabronson21 to sign up through Bronson's MyChart system once new appointments are available.

Ascension Michigan is scheduling appointments for its high-risk patients who are age 65 and older by contacting eligible patients by email, text and phone.