

PROVIDER UPDATE

News from your local Health Department

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Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides eligible families with access to healthy food, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and medical and social service referrals. A recent study shows that WIC enrollment can have a significant impact on pregnancy outcomes.

Between 2016 and 2019, counties that saw an increase in WIC enrollment had lower rates of complications like gestational diabetes, preterm birth, and neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) admissions. Despite its benefits, WIC enrollment decreased during the study period, highlighting the need for more efforts to enroll eligible families, especially in rural areas like northern lower Michigan.

WIC is important for helping low-income pregnant women, new mothers, and young children access the nutrition they need. Increasing WIC enrollment can improve health outcomes for mothers and babies, reducing issues like food insecurity that lead to poor health. The program can be a valuable resource for rural residents to improve maternal and infant health.

To see the complete study: [click here](#) For more information about the WIC program by visiting [the state website](#).



Michigan Arbovirus Activity

165 

Mosquito pools testing positive for arbovirus infection

93 

Animals testing positive for arbovirus infection

25 

Human cases of West Nile virus or other arboviruses reported

Arboviruses, such as West Nile Virus (WNV), Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), and Jamestown Canyon Virus (JCV), remain active in Michigan. In 2024, Michigan reported 165 mosquito pools testing positive for arboviruses, with WNV being the most prevalent. There were 25 human cases reported: 23 WNV and 2 JCV. Animal cases included 84 WNV and 8 EEE-positive animals. These findings emphasize the ongoing need for prevention and awareness in our community.

Remind patients of these preventive measures:

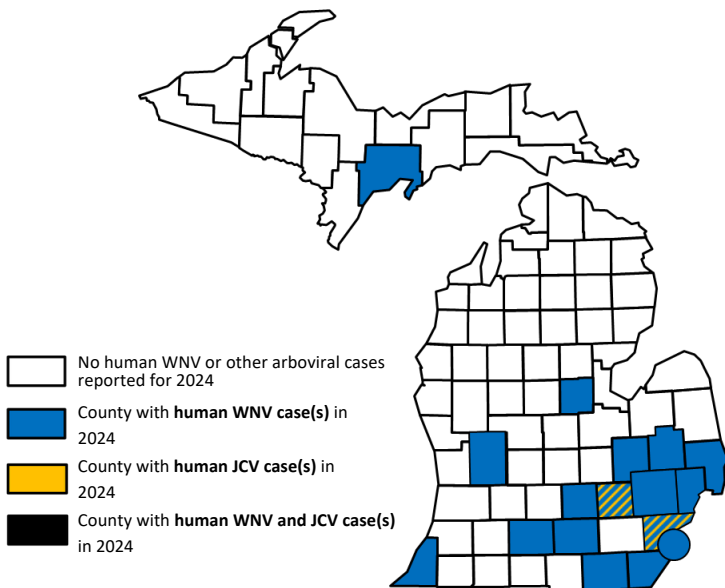
- 1. Repellent Use:** Encourage using EPA-approved insect repellents, such as DEET or picaridin, to avoid mosquito bites. EPA-approved repellents are safe and effective, even for pregnant or breastfeeding women. For children, ensure repellents are applied following safety instructions, avoiding sensitive areas such as the face, eyes, and hands.
- 2. Environmental Control:** Advise patients to reduce mosquito breeding grounds around their homes by eliminating standing water—discarding old containers, repairing septic systems, and frequently cleaning birdbaths, pet bowls, and clogged gutters.

Sick or Dead Birds

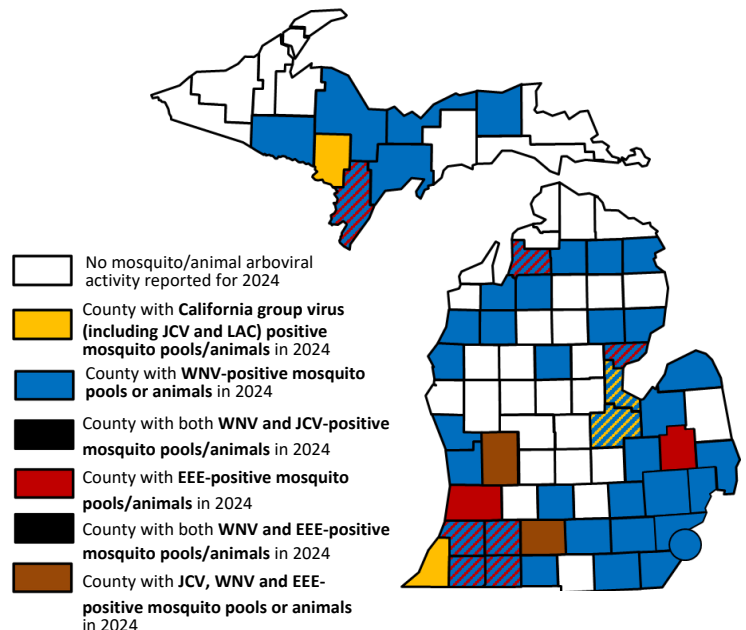
Ill appearing or dead birds or other wildlife can be indicators of local virus activity. Residents are encouraged to post reports to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) [“Eyes in the Field”](#) website to support public health surveillance. The [DNR website](#) provides more details on the reporting process and when the DNR may want to proceed with lab testing of the dead bird.

Keep patients informed about these important safety tips and stay updated on arbovirus activity through Michigan’s Emerging Diseases website: [Michigan Emerging Diseases](#).

Human Cases



Animal Cases



Maps last updated October 4th, 2024

Mortality in the United States — Provisional Data, 2023

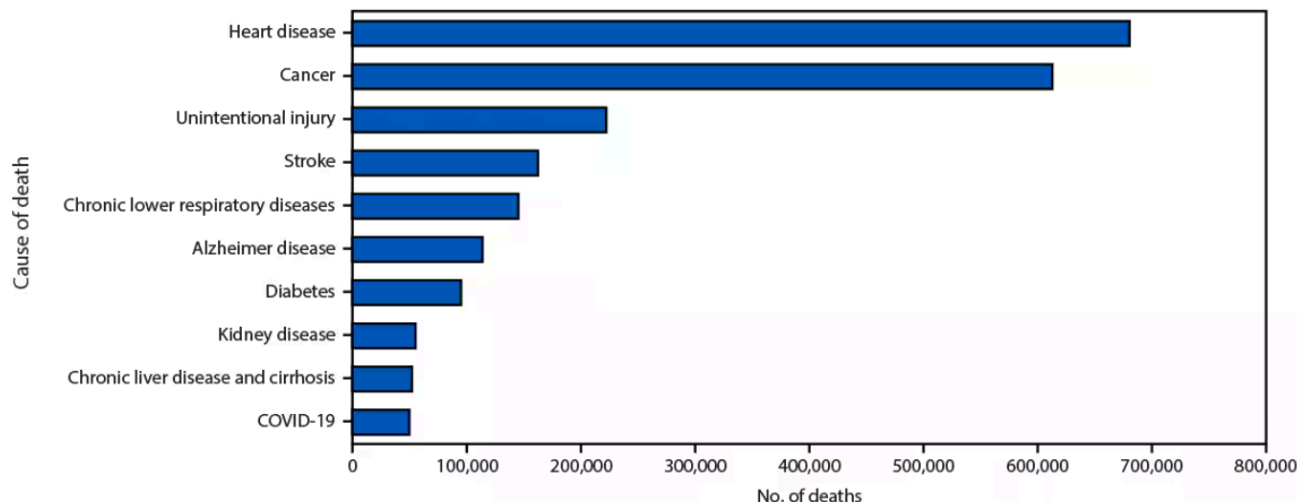
In 2023, the United States saw over 3 million deaths, but the overall death rate decreased by 6.1% compared to the previous year. A significant drop of 68.9% in COVID-19-related deaths was a key contributor to this reduction. Despite this improvement, heart disease, cancer, and unintentional injuries remained the leading causes of death.

Deaths were notably higher among older adults, men, and non-Hispanic Black individuals. These findings highlight the importance of targeted health initiatives for these groups, particularly in addressing chronic conditions and promoting healthier lifestyles to reduce mortality.

For rural health departments in northern lower Michigan, this data can help guide community health initiatives. Focusing on heart health education, cancer prevention, and injury reduction strategies could improve local health outcomes. Additionally, continued emphasis on COVID-19 vaccination and awareness, especially in those over 65 years old and in those with multiple comorbidities is important to maintain the downward trend in related deaths.

For more information, see the [report here](#).

FIGURE 2. Leading underlying causes of death* — National Vital Statistics System, United States, 2023



* National Vital Statistics System provisional data for 2023 are incomplete. Data from December 2023 are less complete because of reporting lags. These data exclude deaths that occurred in the United States among residents of U.S. territories and foreign countries.

Community Connections

Community Connections helps individuals and families in northern lower Michigan access essential local resources like healthcare, food, transportation, and housing support. The program is designed to connect residents to available services that can help improve their overall well-being, especially for those facing challenges in navigating social support systems.

By linking residents to the resources they need, Community Connections helps strengthen our community and ensures that everyone has access to available local services. Learn more about Community Connections and how the program is make a difference in our community, [click here](#).



Vaccine for Children (VFC)

The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program was established in 1994 to ensure that all children, regardless of their family's financial situation, have access to life-saving vaccines. This program helps bridge gaps in healthcare, particularly in rural areas, by making vaccines accessible and removing financial barriers.

From 1994 to 2023, VFC helped prevent approximately 508 million cases of illness, 32 million hospitalizations, and over 1 million deaths, leading to significant cost savings: \$540 billion in direct costs and \$2.7 trillion in societal savings. For every dollar spent on vaccines through VFC, about \$11 are saved, making it a highly cost-effective public health program. By reducing barriers to vaccination, VFC promotes health equity and ensures that more children are protected against preventable diseases, which is especially crucial for rural communities where healthcare access might be limited.

The gains we have made in the drastic reduction in illnesses from once common and deadly illnesses such as measles, whooping cough, polio, bacterial meningitis, and others are one of the greatest health impacts in medicine in the 20th century. The post pandemic drop in immunization rates, especially in young children, are concerning and increases our risk of sustained transmission of these vaccine preventable diseases, as the recent resurgence in measles highlights. We continue to work with our providers and schools to provide factual information and reduce missed opportunities in order to assure that families are both informed and able to access the immunizations that will best promote the health and safety of our communities.

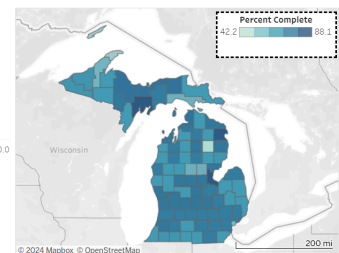
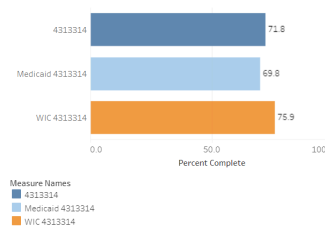
In northern lower Michigan, the VFC program plays a vital role in helping families keep their children healthy, ensuring that routine immunizations are not missed due to cost or access issues. By supporting high vaccination coverage, VFC contributes to healthier communities and helps protect all residents from outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases.

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' immunization department has created an [immunization coverage dashboard](#). The dashboard provides county level immunization coverage estimates for ACIP recommended childhood (19 thru 35-month-olds) and adolescent (13 thru 17-year-olds) vaccines.

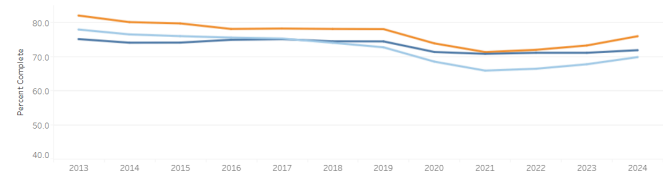


For more information, you can visit the [full article](#)

Michigan, Childhood Immunization Coverage



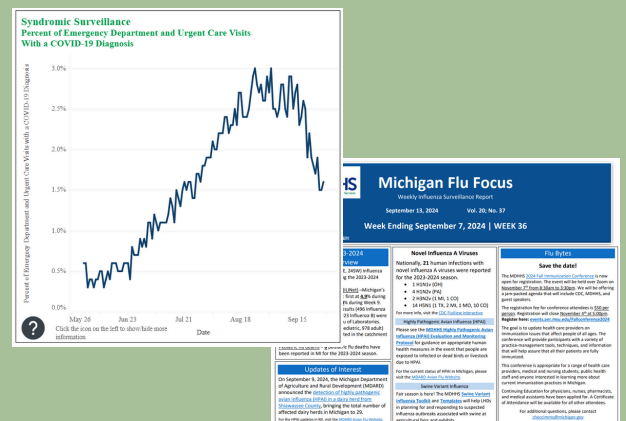
Trends in Childhood Immunizations, 2013 - 2024



COVID and Flu

With the recent spike in [COVID-19 cases](#), it's still important than ever to stay protected. The COVID vaccine is the best defense against serious illness and is available for everyone aged six months and older. Keeping up to date with vaccines helps protect our community.

For more information on the COVID current situation, check out the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) data dashboard here. MDHHS also tracks influenza activity and releases a weekly report on [their website](#).



January 1st- September 30th, 2024

2024 Communicable Disease Report

for
Health Departments of
Benzie-Leelanau, District No. 4,
and Northwest Michigan

Counties Include:

Benzie
Leelanau
Alpena
Cheboygan
Montmorency
Presque Isle
Antrim
Charlevoix
Emmet
Otsego

Disease	BLDHD Total	DHD 4 Total	HDNW Total
Novel Coronavirus COVID-19	174	680	978
Carbon Monoxide Poisoning	0	0	1
Campylobacter	12	14	18
Cryptosporidiosis	1	1	6
Giardiasis	4	6	12
Norovirus	1	1	0
Salmonellosis	9	7	10
Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli --(STEC)	1	2	1
Shigellosis	2	1	3
Yersinia enteritis	4	0	3
Influenza	91	136	289
Respiratory Syncytial Virus	0	2	1
Meningitis - Aseptic	4	0	3
Meningitis - Bacterial Other	1	0	2
Streptococcus pneumoniae, Inv	5	7	6
Blastomycosis	0	1	1
CPO	1	2	4
Candida auris	1	0	0
Coccidioidomycosis	2	1	0
Encephalitis, Primary	0	1	0
Guillain-Barre Syndrome	0	0	1
Histoplasmosis	0	4	1
Legionellosis	0	1	1
Staphylococcus Aureus Infect.*	0	0	1
Streptococcal Dis, Inv, Grp A	4	10	3
Tularemia	1	0	0
Unusual Outbreak or Occurrence	1	1	14
Vibriosis - Non Cholera	1	0	0
Rabies Animal	0	1	0
Rabies: Potential Exposure & PEP	4	32	55
Chlamydia (Genital)	25	53	99
Gonorrhea	2	12	7
Latent Tuberculosis Infection	1	8	3
Nontuberculous Mycobacterium	0	2	1
H. influenzae Disease - Inv.	1	3	0
Pertussis	0	0	1
Shingles	0	1	0
VZ Infection, Unspecified	5	2	2
Babesiosis	1	0	0
Dengue Fever	1	0	0
Ehrlichiosis, Anaplasma phagocytophilum	6	0	1
Ehrlichiosis, Ehrlichia chaffeensis	0	1	0
Lyme Disease	35	4	27
Malaria	2	0	0
Hepatitis B, Chronic	2	0	2
Hepatitis C, Acute	0	0	1
Hepatitis C, Chronic	3	14	6
Total	728	1017	6356



Dr. Joshua Meyerson serves as the Medical Director for three local health departments in northern Michigan: Health Department of Northwest Michigan, Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department, and District Health Department No. 4.