



KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

In the Pursuit of Extraordinary Governance...

**NEWS RELEASE FOR
IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
December 18, 2020

Matt Johnson and Lyndi Warner
Public Information Officers
pio@kalcounty.com

COVID-19 Vaccinations Start in Kalamazoo County

KALAMAZOO, MI—Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department and healthcare partners Ascension Borgess, Bronson Healthcare, Family Health Center, and WMed Health are excited to announce the arrival of the Pfizer vaccine to Kalamazoo County and the first vaccines administered.

The health department, Ascension Borgess, Bronson Health, and WMed Health received their first shipment and will begin administering to employees within their organizations this week. Family Health Center anticipates receiving their shipment in January.

Bill Manns, president and CEO of the Bronson Healthcare system, says, "This has been a long awaited moment and our employees are eager to be vaccinated over the next six weeks, so they can remain healthy and able to continue to care for all patients. We look forward to vaccine supplies arriving steadily so we can complete this phase and expand distribution to others in our community."

All organizations have begun administering the vaccine per the recommended phases as outlined by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), CDC and ACIP. Phase 1A has three priority areas within the phase.

- **Phase 1A:** includes paid and unpaid persons serving in health care settings who have direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials and are unable to work from home, as well as residents of long-term care facilities.
- **Phase 1B:** includes some workers in essential and critical industries, including workers with unique skill sets such as non-hospital or non-public health laboratories and mortuary services.
- **Phase 1C:** includes people at high risk for severe COVID-19 illness due to underlying medical conditions, and people 65 years and older.
- **Phase 2:** all other adults

"Many healthcare workers and first responders are receiving the earliest wave of available vaccines, as these professions are exposed to COVID-19 at higher rates than other people. We thank all our extraordinary caregivers and associates for their continued dedication to our healing Mission and for all they do every day in support of those we serve. When COVID-19 vaccines are available for consumers,

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

311 E. Alcott St. | Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Phone: 269.373.5200 | www.kalcounty.com/hcs

Ascension Borgess will share information about the availability of the vaccines through multiple media channels." Peter Bergmann, President of Ascension Borgess.

Vaccination in one phase and priority area may not be complete before vaccination in another phase begins, and will most likely overlap. The timing of the start of a vaccination phase is dependent on guidance from MDHHS, supply of vaccine from the manufacture, and how the vaccine is allocated from the federal level to Michigan.

Vaccination for the general public is not available at this time. More information will be released as Kalamazoo County and MDHHS moves through each phase and priority areas within those phases.

"We're asking our community to be patient as we work as quickly as possible through the phases and priority areas as outlined by MDHHS," says Jim Rutherford, Health Officer for Kalamazoo County. "It will take some time, but all of us are committed to seeing this through and administering vaccine for Kalamazoo County."

Equitable vaccine access is a top priority for the health department and healthcare partners. Cost will not be an obstacle to getting vaccinated against COVID-19 and will be free.

"Working with community partners in health care to get the vaccine to our employees as well as the public will ensure we are able to reduce the barriers and grant access to all members of the community in receiving the vaccine," says Denise Crawford, President and CEO of Family Health Center. "In this time where there are many places you can go to find information about the vaccine we remind you it is important to evaluate the source of your information, and to look for credible sources.

To stay informed about the COVID-19 Vaccine, visit the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services website, www.kalcounty.com/COVID19, or call the COVID-19 Call Center, 269-373-5200.

The health department is also urging residents during the holiday season to stay vigilant with the public health recommendations – avoid social gatherings, stay at least six feet from others, wear masks and wash hands. These public health recommendations still remain important tools to stopping the spread of COVID-19.

###

Kalamazoo County Government

Health & Community Services Department



[Like Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services](#)



Follow us [@KzooHealth](#)