



BERRIEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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For Immediate Release

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Berrien County Health Department Expands Access to COVID-19 Vaccination

New groups made eligible to receive vaccines on March 8th, as supplies allow

(Benton Harbor, MI) --- The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has announced the state is moving to [the next phase of vaccination](#) as of Monday, March 8th. As vaccine supplies allow, the Berrien County Health Department (BCHD) will expand access to vaccinations to adults over the age of 50. Also on March 8th, caregiver family members and guardians who care for children with special health care needs will be eligible for vaccination as well.

To date, more than half of Berrien County residents over the age of 65 have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. With recent increases in vaccine supply allocations, Berrien County Health Department anticipates being able to start providing vaccines to Berrien County residents who fall in this expanded eligibility group. Starting March 8th, BCHD will allow all adults over the age of 50 to schedule appointments when they are available. According to [the CDC](#), nearly 80% of older adults have at least one chronic medical condition, which further supports the early expansion of eligibility to all adults over 50.

The Berrien County Health Department will not have a pre-registration process or “waitlist” for this newly eligible group. Rather, eligible individuals seeking vaccination appointments should visit the BCHD website regularly; information will be posted on the website directly when there are appointments available for self-scheduling. Eligible residents are encouraged to check the website often as new appointment availability may be added daily and self-scheduling will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. People with limited internet access are encouraged to call the BCHD COVID-19 hotline at 1-800-815-5485 for further assistance in scheduling an appointment.

Adults over the age of 65 will continue to be prioritized for vaccination, if they have not already received it. BCHD will reserve special appointment slots at upcoming clinics so those over the age of 65 may have assurance that they will continue to receive opportunities for vaccination.

All eligible residents are also encouraged to explore vaccination through other vaccine providers in the area, including Meijer Pharmacy in Benton Harbor, Spectrum Health Lakeland, and Rite Aid Pharmacies around the county.

More information about the process for vaccination in Berrien County can be found at www.bchdmi.org/COVID19 and Michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine.

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