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District Health Department No. 2 Expands COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) announced that beginning Monday, March 8 vaccine eligibility includes adults 50 and older with medical conditions or disabilities, and caregiver family members and guardians of children & adults with special health care needs. Beginning Monday, March 22 MDHHS eligibility will include all adults 50 and older.

While giving priority to the above-mentioned individuals, effective Monday, March 8, District Health Department No. 2 will expand on the MDHHS eligibility to permit all adults 50 and older to pre-register to receive the COVID-19 vaccine as well as additional frontline essential workers in Priority 1B, group C. These frontline essential workers include:

- Food and agriculture workers as previously defined
- Utilities or Critical manufacturing workers
- Public transit workers
- Grocery store workers
- U.S. Postal Service workers
- Workers with unique skill sets not covered above, such as non-hospital laboratories, (e.g. veterinarians)

The decision comes on the heels of a successful uptake of the vaccine by the 65 and older population in the area and to help reach the state's goal of vaccinating 70% of the population. "We are pleased to be able to expand vaccine eligibility as we continue to focus on our most vulnerable and those at the highest risk of severe illness due to COVID-19," said Denise Bryan, MPA, DHD2 Health Officer. "With three safe and effective vaccines now available, people should get the first vaccine available to them. This is a way we can return to some kind of normalcy."

Pre-registration for the expanded group starts Monday, March 8; newly eligible will not be able to pre-register until then. To pre-register, please visit www.dhd2.org and click on the pre-registration banner. Once submitted, you will receive a "thank you for your submission" message. With this new expansion, there are thousands of newly eligible individuals and everyone who wants the vaccine will not be able to get it immediately. Patience is appreciated as DHD2 continues to schedule based on the priority groups. It may take several weeks before you receive an appointment.

This expansion is being done in conjunction with the following members of the Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance: Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department, Grand Traverse County Health Department, The Health Department of Northwest Michigan, District Health Department No. 2, District Health Department No. 4, and District Health Department #10. The expansion is done to meet our unique community needs and further expands the guidance set by the State of Michigan.