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Grand Traverse County expanding COVID-19 vaccination effort to off-site mass clinic

TRAVERSE CITY- Grand Traverse County is partnering with Northwestern Michigan College to launch a vaccination clinic for COVID-19 beginning Monday, January 18 at NMC's Hagerty Center through at least April. Vaccines will be given by appointment only and are currently available for individuals in Phase 1A and Phase 1B of the priority groups endorsed by Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

PHASE 1A includes:

- EMS, medical first responders, healthcare workers and residents in long-term care facilities.

PHASE 1B includes:

- Persons age 65 and older
- Some frontline essential workers including:
 - Police officers
 - First responders
 - Frontline state and federal workers
 - Jail and prison staff
 - Pre-K-12 teachers and childcare providers
 - Adult and child protective services, and
 - Homeless shelter staff

For next week, appointments will be available Monday, January 18 through Friday, January 22. To schedule an appointment, please visit <https://gtcountycovid19.com/vaccine/>. We are expecting these appointments to fill up very quickly and it is likely that you will experience difficulty scheduling an appointment early on. Additional appointments will be added weekly as the county receives more vaccine. We encourage you to visit <https://gtcountycovid19.com/vaccine/> frequently to check if additional appointments are available. If you have already signed up for notice on how to schedule an appointment, you will be receiving an email with the link to this website. You must schedule your appointments through this website.

This partnership with NMC will allow for the rapid expansion of the vaccination efforts in our community. "We are excited to expand the availability for more people to get this life-saving vaccine. This is a highly complex and rapidly evolving process that takes incredible logistical coordination and patience from our communities. But any challenges are far outweighed by the promise of a return to normal when we have made it through and are safe from COVID-19," said Health Officer, Wendy Hirschenberger.

"COVID-19 is a community-wide challenge that will require a community-wide response. We at NMC feel it is both our responsibility and our privilege to support this effort and keep our residents safe," said Dr. Nick Nissley, president of Northwestern Michigan College. "I have been pleased to see the people and organizations of Grand Traverse County step up during this time. The finish line is in sight and I know we can get there by continuing to work together."

“Since March 13, 2020 Grand Traverse County and the entire community have worked together to minimize the impact of the Coronavirus on our community. This partnership with NMC highlights the type of commitment our community has to ridding ourselves of the impacts of COVID-19,” said County Administrator Nate Alger. “We are continuing to expand our efforts in vaccination planning to vaccinate as many people as quickly and safely as possible. That said, in the early stages of the mass vaccination efforts we are expecting that you will experience difficulty finding an open appointment until the vaccine becomes widely available to us.”

The NMC Hagerty Center site will be used as an off-site vaccination clinic through at least April. Munson Healthcare is coordinating vaccine distribution through its system. So far, the Grand Traverse County Health Department has vaccinated more than 2,000 individuals in Phase 1A which includes EMS, medical first responders, healthcare workers and residents in long-term care facilities.

Decisions on moving to the next phase are made at the state level, but distribution depends on vaccine availability at the county level and may vary by community. The entire vaccination process statewide is projected to take 9 to 12 months. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services is encouraging all residents to develop a plan to get vaccinated. Residents should know which phase they belong to and to continue to wear masks and practice social distancing.

[Michigan vaccinations phases are as follows:](#)

- Phase 1A: Paid and unpaid persons serving in healthcare settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials and are unable to work from home as well as residents in long term care facilities.
- Phase 1B: Persons 65 years of age or older and frontline essential workers in critical infrastructure.
- Phase 1C: Individuals 16 years of age or older at high risk of severe illness due to COVID-19 infection and some other essential workers whose position impacts life, safety and protection during the COVID-19 response.
- Phase 2: Individuals 16 years of age or older.

These prioritizations may change as more information on vaccine effectiveness and additional vaccination products become available.

Grand Traverse County residents seeking more information about the COVID-19 vaccine can visit <https://gtcountycovid19.com/vaccine/>

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