

To serve, protect, and promote a healthy community for all.



**HEALTH DEPARTMENT**  
Caring today for a healthy tomorrow

## BULLETIN BITS

[WWW.ACCESSKENT.COM/HEALTH/CORONAVIRUS](http://WWW.ACCESSKENT.COM/HEALTH/CORONAVIRUS)  
WEEK OF DECEMBER 27, 2020

# COVID-19 VACCINES ARE HERE: WILL YOU TAKE IT?

The COVID-19 vaccines have made their way to West Michigan and more are expected to be distributed in the weeks and months into 2021. The good news is that, because of the remarkable scientific achievement, several effective vaccines are and will be more readily available. The bad news is that vaccines do not stop pandemics - vaccinations do. One of the latest polls showed that only 58% of Americans are willing to get the vaccine as soon as possible. However, 75% of the population will need to be vaccinated for the country to return to normal.

The Kent County Health Department (KCHD) recognizes community members have varying levels of trust in vaccines and the institutions that provide them, rooted in a variety of historical and contemporary experiences. It also recognizes that many communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 may be most wary of the vaccine. KCHD takes these concerns seriously, and is working hard to engage the community to ensure candid dialogue, transparency, and accountability in its vaccination efforts.

To ensure this, KCHD asked Public Sector Consultants (PSC) —an objective, nonpartisan, third-party consulting firm —to facilitate community conversations about the COVID-19 vaccine. Fifteen 30-minute interviews held with 18 community leaders from the African American, Asian Pacific American (APA), disability, Jewish, Latinx, older adult, Native American, and refugee communities to gather their input and perspectives on barriers to and opportunities for vaccination in their communities.

Following the interviews, KCHD invited participating leaders to a forum to hear PSC's interview findings, discuss leaders' perceptions of vaccination barriers, and receive an update on mass vaccination planning from KCHD. Plans are to continue to engage in more community conversations with County residents in early 2021.

All community leaders said safety and effectiveness were the community members' top concerns about receiving a COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available.

COMMUNITY LEADERS ASKED KCHD TO DEVELOP INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP THE PUBLIC BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW VACCINES WORK AND THE NEED FOR MASS VACCINATION.



See attached Community Leaders Vaccine Engagement Overview

Most Significant Barriers to Vaccination:

- Distrust of Institutions
  - Medical & Governmental
- Language Barriers
- Lack of Accessibility

*Stay up to date*

**FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION ON THE COVID-19 VACCINE**

Go to [vaccinatewestmi.com/](http://vaccinatewestmi.com/) or click "stay up to date"

**FOR VACCINE FACTS**  
CLICK THE Q&A

## KEEP IN MIND...

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations like COVID-19. You may feel anxious, angry, sad, and/or overwhelmed. Find ways to reduce your stress to help yourself and the people you care about.

- Learn the common signs of stress.
- Make time to unwind and do activities you enjoy.
- Talk with family and friends by phone, text, or email.
- If you or a loved one is feeling overwhelmed, get support 24/7 by calling or texting 1-800-985-5990 to reach the Disaster Distress Helpline.
- Learn more about stress and coping during the COVID-19 outbreak: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>