

# COMMUNICABLE DISEASE NEWSLETTER

*A Health Newsletter from the Barry-Eaton District Health Department*

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## UPDATE ON MEASLES IN THE US - ALERT FOR PHYSICIANS

On February 6th, the Michigan Health Alert Network sent out the following message - Between December 1, 2023 and January 23, 2024, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was notified of 23 confirmed U.S. [cases](#) of measles, seven direct importations of measles by international travelers, and two outbreaks with more than five cases each. Most of these cases were among children and adolescents who had **not** received a measles-containing vaccine ([MMR](#) or MMRV), even if age eligible.

Due to the increasing risk of vaccine preventable diseases (VPD), specifically measles, we are reaching out to remind our clinical partners of protocols and resources for evaluation and reporting of patients suspected of having a VPD. Appropriate specimen collection and reporting are crucial to expedite public health action that can limit and control disease transmission.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the epidemiology of VPDs due to limited travel and various other precautions, but it also severely interrupted routine medical care.

As evidenced by recent cases of measles in [Ohio](#), [LA County](#), and along the [I-95 corridor](#), outbreaks of VPDs continue to be a risk for communities throughout the United States. Other VPDs are not the same as COVID, Flu, and RSV. These VPDs need your quick attention to identify and slow the spread of disease. This is especially true in an environment in which routine immunization coverage is lower due to pandemic related disruptions and decreasing confidence in vaccines. It is important for clinicians to ensure patients are up to date with their [recommended vaccines](#) against VPDs such as measles, mumps, rubella, varicella, and pertussis (whooping cough).

**Child with Measles**



### Recommendations for Healthcare Providers, Specifically Measles

- Discuss the importance of MMR vaccine and other ACIP recommended vaccines with parents/guardians and listen and respond to their questions. Questions do not necessarily mean they won't accept vaccines. Sometimes they simply want to be heard and hear your answers to their questions.
- Ensure all patients are up to date on measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine.
  - Children need 2 doses of MMR: one dose at 12-15 months and another dose at 4-6 years.
  - Before any [international travel](#):
    - Infants 6-11 months need 1 dose of MMR vaccine before departure and are recommended to receive 2 doses of MMR vaccine at 12-15 months and a final dose at 4-6 years of age.
    - Children 12 months and older need 2 doses separated by at least 28 days before departure.
    - Teens and adults with [no evidence of immunity](#) against measles need 2 doses separated by at least 28 days.

## Recommendations for Healthcare Providers, Specifically Measles (*continued*)

- Consider measles in patients presenting with febrile rash illness and clinically compatible measles symptoms (cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis), and ask patients about recent travel internationally or to domestic venues frequented by international travelers, as well as a history of measles exposures in their communities.
- Promptly isolate patients with suspected measles to avoid disease transmission and ***immediately report the suspect measles case to the health department.***
- Obtain specimens for testing from patients with suspected measles, including viral specimens for genotyping, which can help determine the source of the virus. Contact the local health department with questions about submitting specimens for testing.
- Additional resources that aim to strengthen communication between healthcare professionals and parents:
  - CDC's [Provider Resources for Vaccine Conversations with Parents](#)
  - [Talking with Parents about Vaccines for Infants](#)
  - [Preparing for Questions Parents May Ask](#)
  - [Infant Immunization FAQs](#) in English and Spanish
  - [Measles fact sheet](#) for parents in English and Spanish

For more information, including guidelines for patient evaluation, diagnosis, and management, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/hcp/index.html>

### Additional Resources:

- [For Healthcare Professionals – Diagnosing and Treating Measles | CDC](#)
- [Interim Infection Prevention & Control Recommendations for Measles in Healthcare Settings | CDC](#)
- [Measles – Vaccine Preventable Diseases Surveillance Manual | CDC](#)
- [Plan for Travel – Measles | CDC](#)
- [Measles Lab Tools | CDC](#)
- [Measles Serology | CDC](#)
- [Measles Specimen Collection, Storage, and Shipment | CDC](#)

## MDHHS RELEASES UPDATED GUIDANCE FOR VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASES

The [MDHHS Recommended Lab Tests for Vaccine Preventable Diseases \(VPDs\)](#) guidance has been updated.



It includes more conditions and updated guidance along with additional VPDs that MDHHS Bureau of Labs can test for and links to disease education. The guidance can be found at [www.mi.gov/cdinfo](http://www.mi.gov/cdinfo) under the Communicable Diseases A-Z page. Many VPDs are now rare due to strong vaccination programs, however, with the recent declines in vaccination rates, recognizing a VPD case may be more difficult, but incredibly important to trigger public health mitigation measures. Therefore, when uncommon diseases are suspected (e.g., measles or mumps), it is critical to promptly collect specimens **at the time of the visit.**

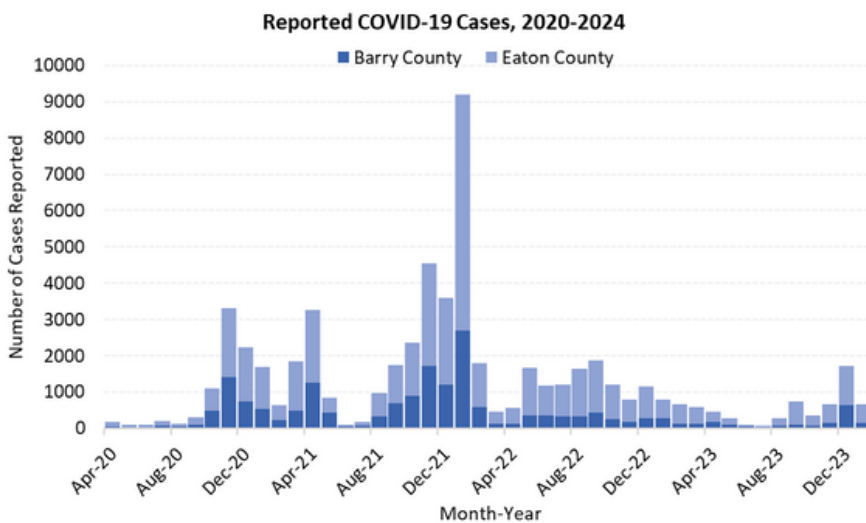
## SEASONAL INFLUENZA

From week 3 to week 4 of 2024, Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) cases increased 61.4% in Barry-Eaton Jurisdiction. There was a 37.0% increase in Barry County cases and 76.7% increase in Eaton County cases. Reported ILI cases in Barry county have increased for the past 4 weeks. ILI reported cases across the state of Michigan have remained above 5,000 cases a week for the past 3 weeks (from January 7, 2024 to January 27, 2024). As of the week ending on January 27, 2024, Michigan remained in moderate ILI activity level. This increased from low activity level in the previous week. Michigan was at a high ILI activity level the week ending on December 30, 2023 and January 6, 2024. It was during MMWR weeks 50 and 51 (weeks ending on December 14, 2023 and December 21, 2023) that Barry, Eaton, and the state of Michigan had the highest 2-week rolling average rates of ILI reported cases.

For the latest on ILI activity in the Barry-Eaton Jurisdiction please visit: [https://barryeatonhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/MMWR\\_4\\_2024.pdf](https://barryeatonhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/MMWR_4_2024.pdf)

## COVID-19

For Barry and Eaton counties, respiratory illness activity was high in December 2023. The number of COVID-19 cases reported in December was the highest monthly cases the jurisdiction has had since September 2022. Despite the spike in December, weekly COVID-19 cases have been steadily decreasing for the past 3 weeks. [New CDC data](#) shows that the 2023 fall Covid-19 vaccines provide 54% increased protection against infection.



## GUN VIOLENCE IN THE U.S. IS A PUBLIC HEALTH EPIDEMIC

Gun violence is a national public health epidemic that exacts a substantial toll on U.S. society. According to the [National Institute for Health Care Management](#) (NIHCM), the number of firearm deaths grew by nearly 43% between 2010 and 2020. Suicide by firearms has also alarmingly continued to rise. **In 2020, for the first time, gun-related deaths surpassed motor vehicle accidents as the top cause of death for those under 19 years of age and has remained the leading cause of death among this age group.**

Health care professionals can play an imperative role in the reduction of gun violence using comprehensive, interdisciplinary approaches, and working in collaboration with other public health professionals in the following ways:

- Proper screening and treatment of depression and intimate partner violence and referring patients to appropriate services
- Talking with patients about the safe storage and handling of guns
- Outside of the exam room, advocating for gun violence research, funding, and gun control legislation at the community, state, and federal levels

For more information regarding the impact of gun violence on society and what health care professionals can do, visit the [National Institute for Health Care Management](#), the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), or the [American Academy of Family Physicians](#).