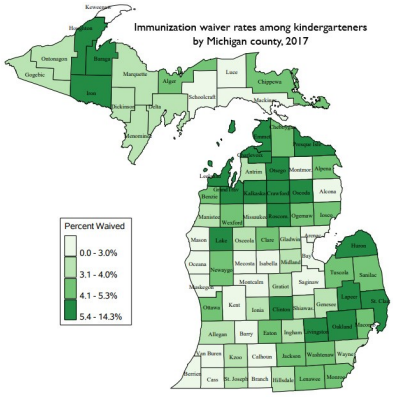
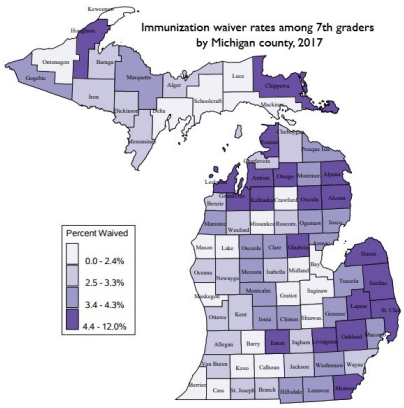
Immunization Waivers





⇒ A study of immunization and pertussis data in Michigan has shown that in addition to the risk to individuals, the risk of community outbreaks of pertussis is increased where there are geographic clusters of children with immunization exemptions[4].

⇒ Studies in other states have shown that where there are areas of high vaccine exemption rates there are much greater risks of outbreaks of diseases such as measles and pertussis [5,6].

Under the Administrative Rules of the Michigan Public Health Code children can be exempted from school immunization laws in three circumstances (R 325.176)[1].

"Medical exemption" means a written statement from a physician that a vaccination is medically contraindicated for a particular child for a specified period of time.

"Religious or other exemption" means a written statement which is signed by the parent, guardian of a child, which certifies that immunization is in conflict with religious or other convictions of the signer, and which includes the name and date of birth of the child. The non-religious exemption is also known as the philosophical exemption.

Children are assessed for immunizations if they are attending group programs, such as day care centers or camps, or entering school. For schools, this assessment is made when children are entering kindergarten, when they are entering into the 7th grade and if they are new students to the school district.

Michigan is one of just19 states to permit philosophical exemptions from immunization. The other 31 do not permit them. 2 states only permit medical exemptions[3] .

The increased risk of disease when many children have vaccine exemptions has substantial implications for public policy, health care costs for the state and for the health of children and adults who for medical reasons are particularly vulnerable to infectious disease, but cannot, because of those medical reasons, be vaccinated and thus protected [7,8,9].

Among a review of 970 measles cases reported to CDC since 2000, that occurred in unvaccinated people who were old enough to receive MMR vaccine, **70.6**% had non-medical exemptions[10].

Higher rates of vaccine exemption in a community are associated with greater measles incidence in that community[10].

Medical Exemptions

◊ A medical exemption is granted when a specific vaccine may be harmful to a child because of a medical condition.

◊ There are a number of medical conditions which would make receiving a vaccine inadvisable.

◊ If a child has a weakened immune system, for example if they have leukemia or other cancer, they should not receive a live vaccine such as chickenpox or the mumps, measles and rubella vaccine.

◊ If a child has a true allergy to any component of the vaccine or had a severe allergic reaction to that vaccine previously, they should not receive it.

Immunization Waivers among School Children, Michigan 2017[2]

Waiver type	Kindergarten	7th grades	New Students
Total Waiver	5,005	3,882	5,478
Medical	251	188	224
Religious	1,095	793	1,299
Philosophical	3,659	2,901	3.955
Total No. students assessed	119,029	113,569	167,341

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