



COVID-19 and Mental Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on our lives on multiple fronts. Many of us are facing challenges that can be stressful, overwhelming, and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19, but they can make us feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. For many Americans, this challenge has been overwhelming, affecting their mental health and well-being. Understanding the impact of the pandemic on mental health, and on those with serious mental illness, is critical in order to help prevention, recovery, and cure.

Several surveys, including those collected by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), have shown increases in self-reported behavioral health symptoms. According to one CDC report, which surveyed adults across the U.S. in late June of 2020:

- **31% of respondents reported symptoms of anxiety or depression**
- **13% reported having started or increased substance use**
- **26% reported stress-related symptoms**
- **11% reported having serious thoughts of suicide in the past 30 days.**

These numbers are nearly *double* the rates we would have expected before the pandemic. There are other reports indicating higher mental health Emergency Department visits in children and adolescents during the pandemic.

Early in the pandemic, there were concerns that suicide rates would increase. So far, data from the CDC suggest that overall suicide death rates have remained steady or have even fallen during the pandemic. Emerging data also indicate that people with schizophrenia and other serious mental illnesses have also been hard hit by the pandemic. Individuals with schizophrenia, for instance, are nearly 10 times more likely to contract COVID-19 and are nearly three times more likely to die from it if they do fall ill, compared with individuals who do not have a mental illness. Finally, deaths due to opioid overdose rose in the context of the pandemic.

**You can submit COVID-19 related questions
by emailing us: AskTheDoc@dwihn.org**



Dr. Shama Faheem is the Chief Medical Officer for the Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network.



COVID-19 and Mental Health

There is evidence that the pandemic has not affected all Americans equally. The most vulnerable populations have been at the highest risk. Job loss, housing instability, food insecurity, and other risk factors for poor outcomes have disproportionately hit minority communities. And while overall suicide rates may have remained steady, data from states such as Maryland and Connecticut suggest that, early in the pandemic, the number of African Americans dying by suicide increased.

This data is a reminder that it is imperative to address long-standing disparities and ensure access to life-saving medical and psychiatric care is available for all Americans.

Stress can cause the following:

- Feelings of fear, anger, sadness, worry, numbness, or frustration
- Changes in appetite, energy, desires, and interests
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Worsening of mental health conditions
- Increased use of tobacco, alcohol, and other substances

It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are ways that you can help yourself, others, and your community manage stress.

Helping Others Cope

Taking care of yourself can better equip you to take care of others. During times of social distancing, it is especially important to stay connected with your friends and family. Helping others cope with stress through phone calls or video chats can help you and your loved ones feel less lonely or isolated.



COVID-19 and Mental Health

Healthy Ways to Cope with Stress

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including those on social media. It's good to be informed, but hearing about the pandemic constantly can be upsetting. Consider limiting news to just a couple of times a day and disconnecting from phone, tv, and computer screens for a while.
- Take care of your body.
 - Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate
 - Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
 - Exercise regularly.
 - Get plenty of sleep.
 - Avoid excessive alcohol, tobacco, and substance use.
 - Continue with routine preventive measures (such as vaccinations, cancer screenings, etc.) as recommended by your healthcare provider.
 - Get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine when available.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- Connect with your community- or faith-based organizations. While social distancing measures are in place, try connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail.

Behavioral health – which includes mental health, substance use, and more – is a key part of your overall well-being. The COVID-19 pandemic has left many people feeling anxious or depressed. The DWIHN website offers a free and anonymous assessment to help you determine if you or someone you care about should connect with a behavioral health professional.

Another excellent digital tool to support mental health is myStrength, an app with web and mobile tools designed to support your goals and wellbeing. myStrength's highly interactive, individually-tailored resources allow users to address depression, anxiety, stress, substance use, chronic pain and sleep challenges, while also supporting the physical and spiritual aspects of whole-person health. Visit the DWIHN website to learn more.

Additionally, if you're feeling emotional distress due to the COVID-19 pandemic, get free, confidential support from a Michigan Stay Well counselor. Dial 1-888-535-6136 and press "8". The Stay Well counseling line is available 24/7. www.Michigan.gov/StayWell

ASK THE DOC



Latest COVID-19 News

As of June 1, COVID-19 cases and test positivity in Michigan continue to decline. The 7-Day Average for new cases is 287 (down from 2,199 on May 12), and the test positivity rate is 3.5% (down from 8.1% on May 12).

Wayne County Cases
(excluding Detroit): 101,067

Wayne County Deaths
(excluding Detroit): 2,516

Detroit City Cases: 50,959

Detroit City Deaths: 2,214

Vaccination Totals as of 6/1/21

Michigan

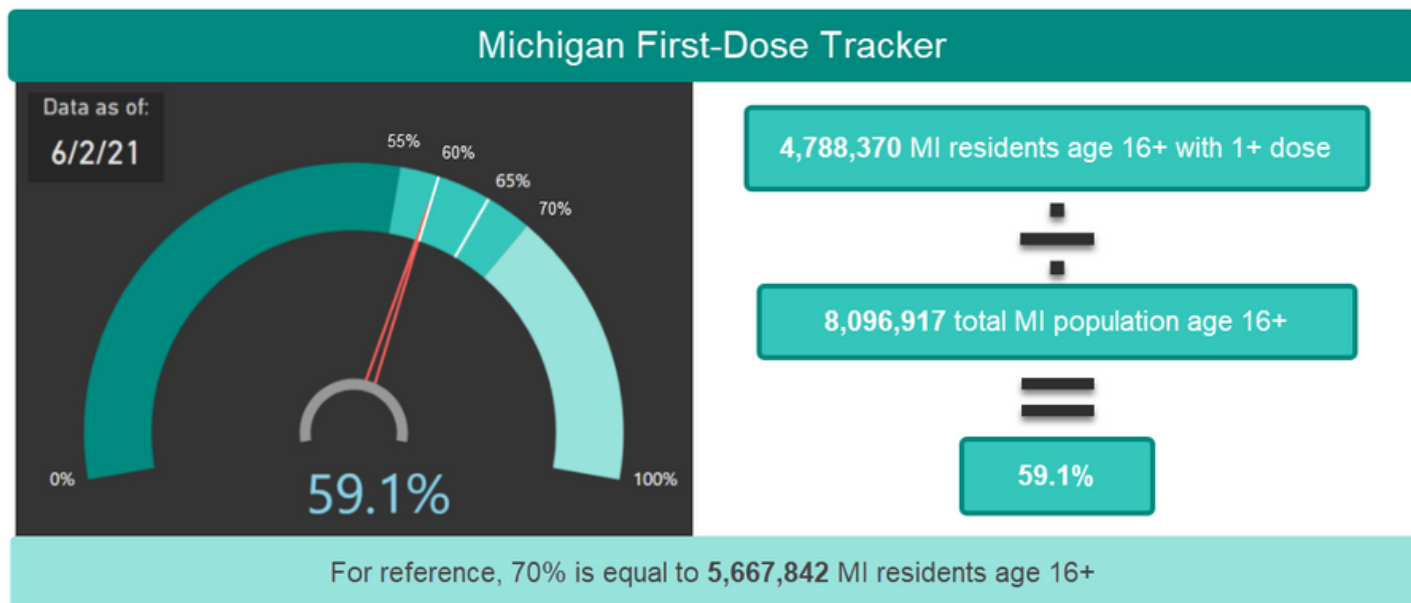
First Dose: 4,788,730 (59.1%)
Two Doses: 4,008,467 (46.6%)

Wayne County

First Dose: 553,231 (60.2%)
Two Doses: 470,845 (51.2%)

City of Detroit

First Dose: 193,805 (34.8%)
Two Doses: 149,369 (26.8%)



Source: <https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus>

[Click Here to Find a Vaccination Site Near You](#)



Latest COVID-19 News

- As of June 1st, 2021, cases and test positivity has continued to decline. Together, the state has 692 known active outbreaks, which is down 22% from the 892 active outbreaks a week ago, according to data from the Department of Health and Human Services. Outbreaks have been on the decline in recent weeks, as have new coronavirus cases and hospitalizations.
- While Memorial Day was a milestone for a return to a sense of normalcy from the Covid-19 pandemic, it could take another two weeks to determine where the US really stands. Some healthcare experts are worried that infections, hospitalizations and deaths would continue to rise if pandemic precautions such as quarantine, school closures, social distancing and mask-wearing were lifted while vaccines were being rolled out.
- CDC data shows that about 51% of Americans have received at least one dose and about 41% are fully vaccinated. Twelve U.S. states now have 70% of adult residents with at least one Covid vaccine shot. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data published Tuesday shows that California and Maryland most recently reported crossing the milestone, joining Vermont, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, New Jersey, Rhode Island, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and New Hampshire.
- The new Michigan Department of Health and Human Services order goes into effect Tuesday, June 1, and ends at 11:59 p.m. on July 1. Starting July 1, all remaining MDHHS restrictions will be lifted, including the mask mandate and capacity limits.



Beginning June 1:



- There will no longer be capacity limits outdoors.
- There will no longer be capacity limits at residential gatherings.
- Indoor establishments will be at 50% capacity.
- Social gatherings will now be regulated only by the venue.
 - *For example, guidelines or rules for an indoor wedding or conference would be set by the establishment in which it is hosted.*
- Face masks continue to be required for non-vaccinated individuals indoors.



Beginning July 1, all broad epidemic orders will be lifted.





Latest COVID-19 News

Guidelines as of June 1:

Indoor gatherings

New: All indoor gatherings are limited to 50% capacity or 25 people, whichever is higher (with a smaller list of exceptions), although there are no more limitations for residential gatherings.

Outdoor gatherings

New: There are no more capacity restrictions on outdoor gatherings.

Entertainment and recreational establishments

New: There are no specific limitations on entertainment and recreational establishments besides the 50% capacity limit.

Restaurants

New: There are no such limitations for restaurants anymore besides the 50% capacity limit

Stadiums and arenas

New: Indoor stadiums/arenas are now limited to 50% capacity and there are no restrictions for outdoor stadiums.

Non-tribal casinos, indoor pools, gyms

New: Non-tribal casinos, indoor pools and gyms are now limited to 50% capacity.

Waiting rooms

New: There are no specific restrictions for waiting rooms besides the 50% capacity limit.

Ice rinks, roller rinks

New: Ice and roller rinks are now limited to 50% capacity.

Personal care services

New: There are no specific restrictions on personal care services besides the 50% capacity limit.

Youth sports

New: All participants age 13 through 19 must still test for COVID-19 regularly.

Mask mandate

New: People must wear a mask indoors at all times unless fully vaccinated, with limited exceptions (no change compared to previous rules, although the mask mandate will go away entirely on July 1)

Contact tracing

New: Only restaurants must continue contact tracing, although they're no longer required to deny customers who decline to share their name and number.



Upcoming Webinars

- **Coping strategies for people within marginalized racial/ethnic groups - Monday, June 7 at 12:00 p.m.**

When a community is disproportionately harmed by a disaster like COVID-19, it is normal to feel sadness, anxiety, or other symptoms of emotional distress. [Register for this free, interactive webinar](#) to learn more about racial and ethnic health disparities and share your thoughts and feelings with others.

- **Uplifting our Older Adults/Seniors - Tuesday, June 8 at 12:00 p.m.**

Older adults - and the people who care for them - have gone through a stressful year of COVID-19 isolation, uncertainty, fear, and grief. Many seniors are still struggling with symptoms of emotional distress. Learn how older adults can manage these feelings and regain hope. [Register for our free, 1-hour webinar.](#)

- **Uplifting our Immigrant Communities - Wednesday, June 9 at 1:00 p.m.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed life dramatically for many Michiganders...and particularly for those whose second language is English. Immigrants may be feeling lingering effects of pandemic-related emotional distress. Join the Michigan Stay Well grant team for a [free, interactive webinar](#) providing mental wellness tips and resources for immigrants and ESL speakers.

- **Finding Resilience while Unemployed - Wednesday, June 16 at 3:00 p.m.**

The pandemic brought massive unemployment, and many are still jobless or under-employed. Are you exhausted and stressed from trying to find meaningful work? Join the Michigan Stay Well grant team for a [free, interactive webinar](#) to learn coping strategies and discuss your challenges with others in your situation.

- **Uplifting our Children and Families - Tuesday, June 22 at 12:00 p.m.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed life dramatically for many families. As a parent or caregiver, how can you help your children cope while maintaining your own mental wellness? [Attend our free, one-hour webinar](#) on how to recognize and manage symptoms of emotional distress in yourself and your kids.