



Partnering with  **MUNSON HEALTHCARE**

*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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**Contact: Mike Grisdale**

**Title: Marketing/Foundation Director**

**Phone: 906.643.0443**

**E-mail: [mgrisdale@mshosp.org](mailto:mgrisdale@mshosp.org)**

### **Mackinac Straits Hospital is Committed to Vaccinating the Community**

(St. Ignace) – Expanded access to the COVID-19 vaccine is an exciting time for our entire community. Since the pandemic began, the availability of a vaccine is the biggest game-changer towards stopping the spread of the coronavirus. At this time, individuals 65 or older, and some essential workers are now eligible to receive the vaccine. Our organization has begun moving from vaccinating our staff to members of the public.

This type of effort requires a large amount of resources, coordination and unfortunately, time. What we receive now in total quantity of vaccine is not adequate to vaccinate everyone who is eligible and wants a shot immediately. The good news is progress is being made at the federal and state levels to secure more vaccine. Yet, we need patience and cooperation from the public as we begin scheduling vaccination appointments.

There is nothing we want more than to vaccinate as many people as we can. Doing so not only benefits our public health, but our children's education and the economy. Any vaccine that we have received has either been administered or is scheduled to be provided. By creating vaccination clinics and scheduling appointments, we are much better equipped to ensure that any individual who comes to our facility expecting a vaccine receives one in a safe environment.

Anyone receiving the vaccine will be monitored for 15 minutes to ensure they don't experience any rare, serious reaction. There may be other minor side effects that follow the vaccination, which can include pain or soreness in the arm where you receive the shot, fever, chills, tiredness or headache, which can last up to a day. The vaccines currently available also require two doses, and the full immunity of the vaccine is not experienced until a week after the second shot.

For those still evaluating your decision to receive the vaccine, we want to make sure you have a clear understanding of how it works. Each of the COVID-19 vaccines uses a message RNA (mRNA), which is a copy of the virus's code that tells the body's immune system how to quickly recognize and fight the virus. **No live COVID-19 virus exists in the vaccine and you cannot catch COVID-19 from the vaccine.**

The speed at which each vaccine was developed was achieved by eliminating bureaucratic red tape within the existing vaccine development process and because funding already existed. No corners were cut that would jeopardize the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. It was properly reviewed and vetted by immunization experts from the Federal Drug Agency and the Centers for Disease Control. Across the globe, scientists and medical experts consistently support the safety of the vaccine.

This process will take time. The more people we can vaccinate, the sooner we can get back to normal. During these upcoming months, we must not let our guard down and will need to continue wearing masks, wash hands regularly and

practice social distancing. Once our more of the at-risk populations are vaccinated, we will continue to move through the prioritization groups so that more members of the public can receive the vaccine.

If you, a friend or a loved one falls into the current priority group, appointments can be scheduled as our vaccine supply increases. In the interim, we ask you take a moment and visit the LMAS District Health Department website ([www.lmasdhd.org](http://www.lmasdhd.org)) and submit your interest for the vaccine. We will contact you regarding our next available community clinic.

MSSH serves the Straits of Mackinac region with local access to high quality health care. MSSH is based at the St. Ignace Campus that includes a 15-bed Critical Access Hospital which houses a Rural Health Clinic, Oncology Clinic, Outpatient Surgical Center, Tribal Health Clinic, Straits Area Pharmacy, Emergency Room, Fast Care, Physical Therapy and a 48-bed long-term care facility (Evergreen Living Center). Other locations include Bois Blanc Island Medical Center, Mackinaw City Medical Clinic, Mackinaw City Specialty Clinic, Mackinac Island Medical Center, and the Rivertown Medical Clinic in Cheboygan. For more information on these locations and the services available, visit [www.mackinacstraitshhealth.org](http://www.mackinacstraitshhealth.org). MSSH is affiliated with the Munson Healthcare System and is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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*\*Photo attached of the Mackinac Straits Hospital in St. Ignace.*