

## Website

Continued from Page 1A

community safe." Statewide, daily case trends, hospitalizations and deaths are also down, but Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, Michigan's chief medical executive, warned that it is vital for people to remain vigilant as the state works toward having 70% of its residents inoculated by the end of 2021.

Michigan reported 4,326 new coronavirus infections on Wednesday, bringing the statewide cumulative total to 508,736. Of those cases, 12,918 people have died, with 51 new deaths reported Wednesday.

The Calhoun County Health Department continues to schedule vaccination clinics for health care workers and long-term care facilities. The next priority group, frontline workers in critical infrastructure and those over the age of 75, is expected to begin soon.

The health department is following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services guidelines for prioritization, distribution and administration of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The county has developed a website dedicated to the vaccine rollout that answers commonly asked questions and provides information about who is currently eligible to be vaccinated in Calhoun County.

"Our call center has really increased since the vaccine was rolled out, and we're really trying to get the message out," said Calhoun County Public Health

Department Deputy Health Officer Brigitte Reichenbaugh. "The website will give them all of the most up to date information ... and what the next steps will be when we get to each group."

So far, 1,625 doses of the vaccine have been administered in Calhoun County, according to state data, and the health department has administered 975 doses to the local health department, EMS and fire department staff.

The rollout has been moving forward smoothly for the health department, Reichenbaugh said, and the county is carefully coordinating with those who are eligible for vaccination so that vaccines don't go to waste.

Public health officials are contacting organizations eligible to be vaccinated to set up clinics, which are being held on a daily basis. They ask members of the public to be patient as vaccination moves through the prioritization phases.

Depending on supplies, it could take weeks or months to move to the next group, health officials say. There is no waiting list for the vaccine, but the health department will continue to update the community on the process.

The county continues to update daily updated COVID-19 data online. Michigan is also providing access to COVID-19 resources, such as testing sites and information about vaccines at michigan.gov/coronavirus.

Contact reporter Elena Durnbaugh at (269) 243-3888 or [edurnbaugh@battlecreekenquirer.com](mailto:edurnbaugh@battlecreekenquirer.com). Follow her on Twitter at @ElenaDurnbaugh.



Protesters swarm the U.S. Capitol building Wednesday as Congress meets to formally ratify Joe Biden as the winner of the 2020 presidential election.

PHOTOS BY JASPER COLT/JUSA TODAY

## Capitol

Continued from Page 1A

to put on gas masks as tear gas was fired in the Rotunda.

A chaplain prayed as police guarded the doors to the chamber and lawmakers tried to gather information about what was happening. An announcement was played inside the Capitol as lawmakers were meeting and expected to vote to affirm Biden's victory. Due to an "external security threat," no one could enter or exit the Capitol complex, the recording said.

Protesters were also seen inside the Senate chamber. One got up on the dais and yelled "Trump won that election."

Several dozen were roaming through the halls, yelling "Where are they?" according to a pool report.

Congressional leaders were whisked to safety. Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, who was attending the joint session, was also said to be safe.

At an earlier rally, Trump had urged his supporters to march to the Capitol. After protesters clashed with law enforcement and breached the Capitol building, Trump tweeted to his supporters to "stay peaceful."

"Please support our Capitol Police and Law Enforcement," Trump tweeted, as tear gas was deployed in the locked-down Capitol. "They are truly on the

side of our Country. Stay peaceful!"

"We're going to cheer on our brave senators and congressmen and women, and we're probably not going to be cheering so much for some of them," Trump said.

Both chambers abruptly went into recess. The District of Columbia's mayor, Muriel Bowser, issued a curfew for 6 p.m.

The skirmishes occurred outside in the very spot where president-elect Biden will be inaugurated in just two weeks.

Protesters tore down metal barricades at the bottom of the Capitol's steps and were met by officers in riot gear. Some tried to push past the officers who held shields, and officers could be seen firing pepper spray into the crowd to keep them back. Some in the crowd were shouting "traitors" as officers tried to keep them back.

A suspicious package also was reported in the area, Capitol Police said.

The skirmishes came just shortly after Trump addressed thousands of his supporters, riling up the crowd with his baseless claims of election fraud at a rally near the White House on Wednesday ahead of Congress' vote.

"We will not let them silence your voices," Trump told the protesters, who had lined up before sunrise to get a prime position to hear the president.



Shelter in the House gallery as protesters try to break into the House Chamber at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday.

## Michigan Supreme Court opens year with new justice

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LANSING — A new justice made her public debut Wednesday as the Michigan Supreme Court heard arguments in five cases.

Election victories by Elizabeth Welch and Chief Justice Bridget McCormack gave Democratic nominees a majority on the seven-member court for the first time since 2010. They campaigned as a team.

"We are all eager to have her contributions to our work," McCormack said at the start of the day.

Because of coronavirus restrictions, the Supreme Court still is hearing cases by video conference and not in its Lansing courtroom.

Welch, a Grand Rapids-area lawyer, took the seat of Stephen Markman, 71, a conservative justice who served for 21

years but couldn't seek re-election because of age limits.

"I am not a textualist," Welch said before the election, referring to a philosophy favored by conservatives of looking strictly at a law's text for meaning. "I believe you do have to sometimes look at legislative intent if a law is not clear. The justices have to figure out an answer somehow."

The court heard arguments in civil and criminal cases Wednesday, including a dispute over access to documents at the University of Michigan. Welch slipped once when she referred to attorney Philip Ellison by the wrong name.

"You're new today. You get the pass," Ellison replied.

## Vaccine

Continued from Page 1A

an appointment before you head out to get your vaccine."

This ramp up will start Monday. Those newly eligible for the vaccine will include:

- Any Michigander 65 and older
- Police officers
- K-12 teachers
- Prison and jail officers
- Child care providers

Whitmer said local health departments are offering appointments through their websites, and encouraged those eligible to sign up right away. She stressed getting the appointment is crucial to avoid waiting in long lines without a scheduled time to receive a vaccine.

Although the vaccination process is crucial to ensuring a safe return to normalcy, the slow rollout of the vaccine in Michigan is evidence it will take substantial time before enough people are inoculated. Although the state had hoped to vaccinate more than 5 million adults by the end of the year — 70% of adults in the state — it's on pace to get doses to roughly half that number.

This could affect whether it is safe to resume any form of indoor dining in the future. Right now, an order banning restaurants or bars from offering indoor meals is set to expire Jan. 15.

While data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently showed Michigan as one of the worst states when it comes to vaccinating its residents, Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, the state's chief medical executive, said updated data will show Michigan is one of the best in the nation when it comes to the percentage of vaccinated residents.

"We are now three weeks into our vaccination efforts," Khaldun said. "Vaccines are the way that we are going to end this pandemic. We set a goal to have 70% of Michiganders over the age of 16 vaccinated as quickly as possible. In fact, just before this press conference, my team had a meeting with the CDC, and we were told that Michigan is now in the top five states in the entire country when it comes to the percentage of Michiganders that have been vaccinated compared to other states."

Whitmer said the goal is to use 90% of distributed vaccines within seven days of receiving them. If that actually works, the state could be running out of doses on a regular basis, she said.

Whitmer, the health department and entities that have vaccine face growing scrutiny over the state's relatively and rapidly increasing cases.

Although the state has more than 520,000 Moderna vaccines and 40,000 people have received a second dose of the vaccine.

The data the CDC collected and posts to its website is incomplete, said

Sarah Lyon-Callo, the state's epidemiologist.

"CDC's dashboard is not meant to be a real-time tool. It is updated three times a week. There is more of a lag in terms of information getting onto the CDC dashboard," she said Wednesday.

"The numbers ... on that dashboard do not reflect all of the doses that have been administered in the state of Michigan. There are doses that have incomplete provider information that were not being included in that dashboard. ... We've worked with CDC to identify this issue, and we've also worked with CDC to come up with a fix for this issue. So, their dashboard will be updated ... and I think you'll see that those numbers have improved quite a bit."

In this initial phase of the vaccine rollout, the state is focused on vaccinating hospital workers, nursing home residents and others atop the priority list of those at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. However, as other states move on to vaccinating senior citizens, teachers and others, the administration is facing even more pressure to pick up the pace.

Khaldun previously noted this is the largest undertaking of its kind in U.S. history. But every state faces many of the same challenges that appear to have hindered Michigan more than others.

Khaldun has acknowledged some providers initially delayed using every dose of the vaccine. Vaccinating every hospital worker on the same floor at the same time would hamper the hospital's ability to function, she and others have argued.

Hospital associations and other leaders in the private sector agree they need to ramp up administration of vaccines. Holiday scheduling and working through communications issues with the federal government played a role in slowing down vaccinations.

Although daily case trends, hospitalizations and deaths are down, Khaldun warned it's vital for residents to remain vigilant. She pointed to reports of people who received the first dose of the vaccine still catching COVID-19 — the dose decreases chances of getting sick, but it's not until someone receives the second dose that they have the greatest chance of avoiding the disease altogether.

"While we have not identified that new variant in the state of Michigan, it is very likely it is already here or will be here soon, and that is concerning," Khaldun said.

As of this week, more than 500,000 Michiganders have contracted the disease caused by the coronavirus since the start of the pandemic. That has led to more than 12,800 deaths because of COVID-19.

Contact Dave Boucher at [doucher@freepress.com](mailto:doucher@freepress.com) or 313-938-4591. Follow him on Twitter @Dave\_Boucher1.

**REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS**  
 THE BATTLE CREEK AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (BCATS) HEREBY GIVES NOTICE of opportunity for public involvement in the tenth amendment to its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for fiscal years (FYs) 2020-2023 (10/1/19-9/30/23), consisting of the following proposed additions: 1) FY21 transit capital assistance for Battle Creek Transit to continue a Mobility Management model to coordinate countywide transportation & dispatch services between multiple providers. Total budgeted amount \$82,500; 80% Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 (Elderly & Disabled), 20% State of Michigan Comprehensive Transportation Fund (CTF); 2) FY21 transit operating assistance for Battle Creek Transit to continue an effort to operate demand response service for seniors, persons w/disabilities, and the general public beyond the existing fixed route hours and boundaries. Total budgeted amount \$459,990; 80% FTA Sec5310 (Elderly & Disabled), 20% State of Michigan CTF; 3) FY22 local safety project of Calhoun County Road Dept (CCRD) for tree removal along 3.4 miles of county roads: H Dr S from 6 Mi Rd eastward to 7 1/2 Mi Rd, 12 Mi Rd from B Dr S southward to I Dr S, and 7 Mi Rd from K Dr S southward to Newton/Burlington townships line. Total budgeted amount \$438,776; 80% Federal Risk Rural Roads (HRRR), 10% CCRD; 4) FY22 local safety project of CCRD for installation of overhead flashing beacons at intersection of U Dr N and 1 Mi Rd in Bedford Township. Total budgeted amount \$27,372; 90% CCRD; and 5) FY21 preliminary engineering (PE) for the Michigan Dept of Transportation's planned FY21, \$4.5M reconstruction of the Battle Creek rest area building on eastbound I-94 between Helmer & Capital. Total budgeted amount for PE \$520,000, 100% State "M" funds - Michigan Betterment. Further details of the above listed changes, and other projects in the TIP, can be provided upon request and may also be found online at [www.bcatsmpo.org](http://www.bcatsmpo.org). Public comment by e-mail to [local@bcatsmpo.org](mailto:local@bcatsmpo.org) is encouraged before Policy Committee action on 1/27/21. Due to restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, regular Committee meetings are being held electronically in a virtual setting; details on how to access and participate in the 1/13/21 Technical Committee meeting and the 1/27/21 Policy Committee meeting are posted on BCATS' home page at [www.bcatsmpo.org](http://www.bcatsmpo.org). Comments will be accepted thru January 27th. Direct questions and/or comments to: BCATS, 601 Avenue A, Springfield, MI 49037; fax 269/963-4951, e-mail [bcats@bcatsmpo.org](mailto:bcats@bcatsmpo.org).