

THE MICHIGAN VACCINE PROJECT (MVP)

Protecting health through vaccine education

Vaccination plays a critical role in helping protect Michiganders from life-threatening diseases like the flu, measles and COVID-19. In 2021, COVID-19 vaccination rates in Michigan began to plateau, while routine childhood rates declined^{1,2}. This decrease in vaccination rates was partly due to people avoiding routine visits to their primary care providers during the pandemic and the spread of vaccine disinformation and misinformation online. Vaccine disinformation refers to claims about vaccination that are intentionally created to deceive, often for economic gain or social influence. Vaccine misinformation is information that is shared with good intentions but is inaccurate.

In the state's rural communities, COVID-19 and routine childhood vaccination rates were below the state and national averages. This put young children, the immunocompromised, older adults, and rural communities, where access to healthcare may be limited, at increased risk of hospitalization and death from preventable diseases.

To help Michiganders cut through the noise of vaccine disinformation and misinformation and make informed decisions about vaccination, Michigan State University Extension, or MSU

Extension, was selected by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services or MDHHS to develop vaccine education programming specifically for two audiences: families with youth and rural residents. MSU Extension was selected based on their successful partnership with MDHHS on the Physician Peer Education Project on Immunization, which has provided timely education to healthcare professionals since 1995. MSU Extension was also chosen for their history of work in rural communities and expertise in educational programming related to health, families and children. MSU Extension responded by creating the Michigan Vaccine Project or MVP.

MVP was a multi-year (2021-2024), \$7 million vaccine education effort that leveraged MSU Extension's statewide network of county offices and community partnerships to provide people with trusted, evidence-based vaccination information. The MVP outreach campaign utilized digital, radio and print materials, as well as in-person and virtual education programming, to inform Michiganders' vaccination decision making. By empowering communities and individuals to make informed choices, MVP promoted a healthier Michigan for all.

1 <https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/resources/covid-19-vaccine/covid-19-dashboard>

2 <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/adult-child-serv/childrenfamilies/immunization/localhealthdepartment/county-immunization-report-card>



Program Highlights

120+ community events participated in, reaching over 20,000 people.



14 Million reached through all outreach efforts including in-person, newspaper, television, radio, social media and web.



34 articles on vaccination published to the MVP website.



64,000 engagements across 1,600 social media posts created by MVP.



10 youth became MVP 4-H Community Health Ambassadors.



22 educational webinars delivered by medical professionals, public health experts and community leaders.



Community Presentations and Outreach

A team of Extension professionals delivered vaccine education programming around the state. MVP instructors delivered presentations at senior centers, veterans' groups, farmers' markets, libraries and community events, among others, and distributed educational brochures, materials, and flyers while fielding questions from the public and directing them to trusted resources on vaccination.

Feedback from these presentations was overwhelmingly positive:

"Just participated in the workshop on vaccination, and it is vital these teachings and these understandings be shared and that they be received by the local communities so that we can have a healthier and safer world."

MVP Vaccine Presentation Attendee

"I'm a full-time resident of Beaver Island [...]. To have an outreach program where we see a physical body presenting important information is a definite advantage, so we appreciate the time and effort it takes for Michigan State University and the Extension office to put us on their list, because sometimes we feel forgotten."

MVP Vaccine Presentation Attendee

Presentation Highlights

- 80+ youth-focused MVP events reaching 2,000+ participants.
- 35+ community-focused MVP events reaching 20,000 participants.
- 15+ rural adult-focused MVP presentations reaching 350+ participants.



4-H Community Health Ambassador Program

To reach more young people with evidence-based vaccine education, MVP created a 4-H Community Health Ambassador program. The MVP ambassador program was made up of teens from across the state who were trained as peer educators for vaccine education efforts in their communities. Ambassadors in the program received training on youth leadership, vaccine education, and video and social media production. As part of this role, ambassadors designed, produced, and delivered educational videos, social media posts and workshops about the health benefits of immunizations and vaccinations.



4-H Community Health Ambassadors share vaccine information at the Daniel Tiger Day Event in 2023.

Over the course of the project, 10 teens participated in the program. Once equipped with the knowledge and skills to get started, ambassadors began participating in community outreach throughout the state. Furthermore, ambassadors have engaged indirectly with the public through partnerships with Detroit Public Television, the Michigan Learning Channel and PBS affiliate WKAR.

4-H Community Health Ambassadors helped their communities, including other youth, become better informed about the science behind immunizations and vaccines so that individuals could make more knowledgeable decisions about their health and the health of their families.

Feedback from 4-H Community Health Ambassadors about their experiences was very positive:

"I loved creating [social media graphics] and videos in trying to help stop misinformation and give real information about vaccinations. I loved [...] learning more about the behind the scenes of TV, building scripts, and giving out vaccine information at Be My Neighbor Day. I loved going to the art museum, hockey game, being an Among Us character, and of course learning while having fun. This has been such an amazing program and I am so happy I got to be a part of it."

4-H Youth Health Ambassador

Ambassador Program Highlights

- 9 MVP youth-led events reached over 18,000 people.
- 48 MVP messages developed with Detroit Public TV and the Michigan Learning Channel, with a viewership of over 48,000 people.
- Youth in the program demonstrated a 90% increase in knowledge of vaccination science.



My Vaccine Story Video Series

The MVP team created 10 documentary videos that captured the experiences and motivations of everyday Michiganders who chose to get vaccinated and advocate for others to do the same. These stories included firsthand accounts from nurses who cared for COVID-19 patients during the height of the pandemic, as well as stories from a diverse group of people: a high school quarterback, an outdoorsman/retired state trooper, a community health ambassador, a farmer, a veteran, and an MVP team member who conducted outreach efforts on Beaver Island. These video stories were shared on social media, turned into radio and Spotify ads and transcribed for use in articles on the MVP website.

Photos of vaccine story interviewees.



Educational Webinars

The MVP webinar series honored the spirit of Extension by connecting the expertise of those within Michigan State University and our partner organizations directly to the general public in support of vaccine education. Webinars included topics such as back-to-school vaccinations, women's and men's health, Indigenous experiences with vaccinations, COVID-19 boosters, HPV, measles, vaccine hesitancy, and misinformation online. The webinar series featured a diverse set of MSU faculty and staff, as well as outside partners that included Michigan nurses, physicians, and public health leaders.

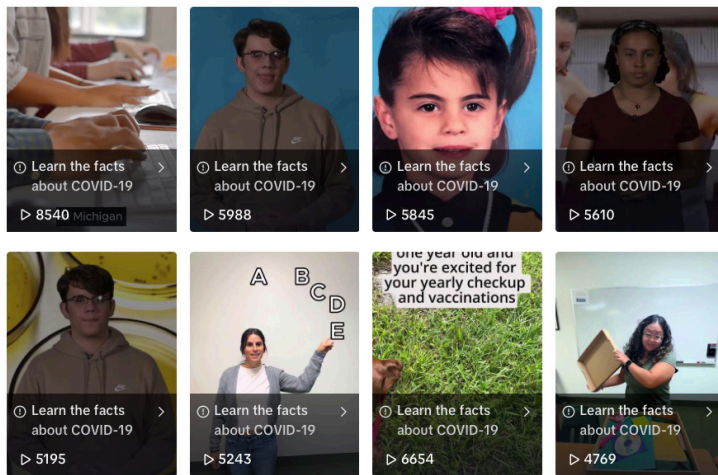


Dr. Ida Rubino, Family Medicine Physician at Corewell Health, joins an MVP Webinar to provide an update on the COVID-19 Vaccine in the summer of 2024.

Webinar Highlights

- 22 webinars recorded and posted to the MVP website and MVP social media channels.
- Over 100 people attended an MVP live webinar.
- Over 15,000 views of webinar video clips across MVP social media channels.

Social Media



Videos on the MVP TikTok channel

The MVP team pioneered the use of TikTok and podcasts as educational tools at MSU Extension to help deliver vaccine education.

This was in addition to MVP's Instagram, Facebook and X social media accounts. A group of MVP staff developed hundreds of social media posts linked to emerging issues, current events and trending activities to engage more people in learning. Social media captions included on each posting provided additional science-based information and actions, including information about where to get vaccines.

Social Media Highlights

- Over 1,600 social media posts created for use on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X and YouTube.
- Over 625,000 impressions across all platforms.
- Over 64,000 engagements across all platforms.
- Social channels: @michiganvaccineproject (Instagram, TikTok and YouTube), @MSUExtensionMVP (Facebook), @michiganvaccine (X).



Media Campaigns

MVP's online outreach efforts included the use of digital display ads that appeared on an array of websites and mobile applications and incorporated the use of geofencing in some instances to better target ad content. To ensure that MVP's vaccine education materials reached people beyond social media or online spaces, the program also advertised in regional newspapers and radio stations broadcasted in rural areas.

Newspaper ads provided information about the benefits of vaccination and promoted MVP's

educational resources, including the MVP webinar series and website. Radio ads featured rural voices from MVP's "My Vaccine Story" video series, and MVP program instructors and 4-H ambassadors participated in radio interviews. MVP also wrote and placed stories about local vaccine champions in local newspapers.

Media Campaign Highlights

- Digital display reach — 6,342,750 impressions.
- Radio reach — 4,672,161 potential listeners.
- Newspaper reach — 853,372 potential readers.

A Lasting Impact

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, MSU Extension's Michigan Vaccine Project helped provide rural Michiganders and families with the resources they needed to make informed vaccine decisions for themselves, their loved ones and their community. In providing this education, MVP helped to counter the growing spread of vaccine misinformation and disinformation online and helped Michiganders find trusted, scientifically accurate resources to inform their healthcare decision making.

Additionally, the 4-H Youth Health Ambassador Program provided youth with opportunities to see a place for themselves in public health, both as professionals and engaged citizens. Outreach and education like that provided by MVP has the potential to save lives, prevent suffering, reduce stress on our healthcare system and lower the overall cost of medical care for Michigan communities.



A youth participant uses the Germ-o-Scope 3000 to learn more about the spread of germs.

Support for the Michigan Vaccine Project came from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

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