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## January is National Radon Action Month

**St. Johns, Stanton, Ithaca, MI** – The Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) is encouraging residents to test their homes for radon this January and is offering free test kits to those living in Clinton, Gratiot, and Montcalm counties.

MMDHD's Health Officer, Liz Braddock says, "Testing your home is the only way to know if you and your family are at risk from radon since there are no warning symptoms and no physical signs to let you know you are being exposed."

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas. It is tasteless, odorless, and colorless. It comes from the radioactive breakdown of radium, which comes from the radioactive decay of uranium. Both radium and uranium are found in at least trace amounts in almost any kind of soil or rock.

One in every four Michigan homes is expected to have radon levels that exceed the recommended federal action level. This is alarming because radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, behind smoking. Home radon testing is recommended every two to five years because homes settle and new cracks form in the foundation, causing radon levels to change. You can't see, smell or taste radon. The only way to know if you have elevated radon levels is to test.

Get your free radon test kit by visiting or contacting MMDHD:

- Clinton County Branch Office: 1307 E. Townsend Road, St. Johns. Phone: 989-224-2195
- Gratiot County Branch Office: 151 Commerce Drive, Ithaca. Phone: 989-875-3681
- Montcalm County Branch Office: 615 N. State Street, Stanton. Phone: 989-831-5237

For further information about radon, visit: [Michigan.gov/radon](https://Michigan.gov/radon) or [EPA.gov/radon](https://EPA.gov/radon).

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*Mid-Michigan District Health Department has proudly served the residents of Clinton, Gratiot, and Montcalm Counties since 1966. We take action to protect, maintain and improve the health of our community.*

# DAILY NEWS

## Free Narcan vending machine now available at UM Health-Sparrow Carson

Local health departments also offer Narcan

By Tim McAllister

January 10, 2026

There are now free Narcan (naloxone) vending machines available for public use at University of Michigan Health Sparrow hospitals in both Carson City and St. Johns, with more likely to be installed, expanding access to a critical tool to combat the opioid epidemic.

The machines were unveiled on Tuesday at UMH-Sparrow Carson and UMH-Sparrow Clinton, and their goal is to help underserved communities and reduce overdose deaths.

The machines are stocked with Narcan received from the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services.

Anyone with opioids or sedating medicines in their home should have naloxone on hand. The substance can sustain a person suffering an overdose until emergency medical services arrive.

"I believe the hospitals in Ionia and Eaton are looking at the system, but that is up to the management team for those facilities," UMH-Sparrow Senior Media Relations Specialist Jeremiah Wilcox said. "The devices are located near the emergency department, accessible 24/7/365 to the public, and no information is required nor taken. Restocking is continuous by the pharmacy team 365 days a year."

The Ionia County Health Department is one of multiple local agencies also offering free Narcan, as well as Deterra drug deactivation disposal pouches. Both of these resources

can be found in the second-floor health resources vending machine, located at 175 E. Adams St. in Ionia.

"Narcan (naloxone) is an important tool in helping to reduce overdose deaths due to opioids," said Ionia County Health Officer Haleigh Leslie. "It is easy and safe to use. Having free Narcan available to the public helps to reduce the number of people who die from opioid overdoses."

It is important to make sure Narcan is stored properly (not in a refrigerator or freezer) and has not expired.

"Storage of the medication should be at room temperature, not stored in a vehicle," Wilcox advised.

Once naloxone has been administered, it's vitally important to call 911.

"In the event the nasal spray needs to be utilized, contact emergency management services to continue treatment as needed," Wilcox said.

There are also a variety of locations in Montcalm County where people can obtain free Narcan. Visit [mmdhd.org/substance-use-disorder-P-revention](http://mmdhd.org/substance-use-disorder-P-revention) for more information.

"It is absolutely important that Narcan is available to folks," said Mid-Michigan District Health Department Public Information Officer Brady Guilbault (the MMD HD covers Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm counties). "It rapidly and temporarily reverses the dangerous effects of an opioid overdose, and works if you have opioids in your body such as fentanyl, heroin and prescription opioids.

"Now, the common misconception is the thought of overdose due to 'misuse' when it is so important to consider any accidental ingestion by children, anyone who accidentally takes too much of a prescription or possibly forgets that they may have already taken a medication for the day," Guilbault added. "The possibilities to consider when thinking of the 'why' of an overdose are vast, which makes the access to Narcan very important."

# DAILY NEWS

## Local medical director says vaccine changes will cause confusion, risk more infection

*By Elisabeth Waldon*

*on January 12, 2026*

STANTON — The medical director of the Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) is telling local healthcare officials that recent changes to the federal government's recommended childhood immunization schedule will cause confusion and risk more infection.



Dr. Jennifer Morse

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, in a change sought by the U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. reduced the number of vaccines it recommends for children from 18 to 11.



The CDC will now only recommend once broadly recommended vaccines against flu, rotavirus, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, some forms of meningitis or RSV and COVID only for children at high risk or based on individual doctor advice, according to the Associated Press. However, all those vaccines will continue to be available to anyone and will continue to be covered by insurance.

Vaccines which remain on the national recommended-for-all list still include measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis or whooping cough (DTaP), polio, chickenpox, hib or haemophilus influenzae type B, PCV or pneumococcal conjugate vaccine and human papillomavirus (HPV), with the latter seeing guidance reducing the number of recommended vaccine doses against HPV from two or three shots to just one, according to the Associated Press.



Dr. Jennifer Morse is the medical director of the MMDHD, which covers Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm counties. Morse sent out an email to local healthcare workers on Jan. 6.

“Fellow Healthcare Partner,” the email begins. “This week, the Secretary of the HHS and the Acting Director of the CDC announced a new childhood immunization schedule. This change was not based on any new research or evidence, rather an assessment of other countries’ practices. A useful and detailed response to this assessment can be found at [evicollective.org/tec-briefs](http://evicollective.org/tec-briefs). We recognize news of this new schedule may be causing confusion for you, your staff and your patients.

“MDHHS restated their support of following the child and adolescent immunization schedule produced by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) in a press release Jan. 6,” Morse wrote. “We at the local health department agree with this guidance, as well as following the AAFP immunization schedule for adults ages 19 and older and following guidance on recommended vaccines during pregnancy from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG).

“According to the HHS fact sheet, their schedule change should not alter insurance coverage, including Medicaid, the Children’s Health Insurance Program and the Vaccines for Children program,” Morse wrote. “It also will not impact the vaccines required for childcare and school entry in Michigan as these are defined in the Communicable Disease Administrative Rules, R 325.176.

“In summary, the new immunization schedule announced by HHS and the CDC will not change how the health department or MDHHS recommend or provide vaccinations,” Morse summarized. “It will likely cause more confusion, continued decreases in vaccination rates and risks of preventable infections. We will continue to do all we can to counter these issues. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help you, and if you have any questions or concerns.”



The federal government's updated recommended childhood vaccine schedule can be found at [hhs.gov/childhood-immunization-schedule/index.html](https://hhs.gov/childhood-immunization-schedule/index.html).

For more information about the local MMDHD, visit [mmdhd.org/about-us](https://mmdhd.org/about-us).