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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

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MDHHS launches hotline for seasonal farmworkers to get bilingual information about COVID vaccines, other health matters

LANSING, Mich. – A new bilingual hotline makes it easier for Michigan’s migrant workers and their families to get information about the COVID-19 vaccine and other health-related matters.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Office of Migrant Affairs is launching the toll-free number, 1-833-SIAYUDA (1-833-742-9832). *Si ayuda* means “yes help” or “yes assistance” in Spanish.

More than two-thirds of the approximately 90,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their family members in Michigan have limited English language proficiency, which may prevent them from getting access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatment. That’s according to the University of Michigan’s 2023 study “Fair Housing Access, Affordability, and Quality for Michigan Farmworkers During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond.”

“We aim to make health care in Michigan client-centered, which includes providing information in the person’s primary language when available to ensure timely health services,” said Dwayne Haywood, senior deputy director of the MDHHS Economic Stability Administration. “The Farmworker Hotline is a translation tool to help keep farmworkers healthy and reduce health-related work absences that could result in loss of earnings needed to support their families.”

Farmworkers are a vital part of Michigan’s annual \$104.7 billion food and agricultural industry. The hotline will expedite COVID-19-related services to Michigan’s migrant and seasonal farmworkers, including food processing workers, dairy workers and nursery/greenhouse workers.

The MDHHS Farmworker Hotline – which is funded by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – will be answered by MDHHS Migrant Affairs’ staff who are fluent in both Spanish and English.

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Migrant Affairs staff will answer vaccine questions and connect farmworkers to vaccination clinics and resources, make appropriate referrals to local offices, and provide other MDHHS program information based upon farmworker inquiries.

For farmworker calls in languages other than English and Spanish, a translation service will be available. MDHHS has translation services policy and contracts in place statewide to provide state-of-the-art health care to Michigan residents.

Ultimately, the goal of the MDHHS Farmworker Hotline is to help Michigan provide bilingual residents with tools to prevent disease, improve health outcomes and increase well-being. Hotline information distribution is being provided to all Michigan local offices serving migrant and seasonal farmworkers, partner agencies, and through social media.

Find more details at www.michigan.gov/migrantaffairs or www.michigan.gov/help4migrants.

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