Michigan’s Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

Health, Services, and Accessing Care

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Putting people first, with the goal of helping all Michiganders lead healthier and more productive lives, no matter their stage in life.
Objectives

1. Identify who makes up Michigan’s farmworker population and where they are located

2. Identify common chronic illnesses farmworkers face

3. Identify barriers to accessing healthcare and discuss ways to eliminate these barriers

4. Learn about the services and resources available to migrant and seasonal farmworkers

5. Learn the importance of outreach to farmworkers and opportunities to reach farmworkers in your area
Meet the Team

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DALE FREEMAN
Director

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GEORGE RAMIREZ-MADRIGAL
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Student Assistant

MIGRANT SUPERVISORS & SPECIALISTS
11 Local County Migrant Programs

STACEY TADGERSON
Departmental Specialist

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)
Michigan’s Agricultural Industry

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers are key in the production of a wide variety of crops each year.

MI leads the nation in asparagus, black beans, cranberries, cucumbers, tart cherries, Niagra grapes, and squash.

Michigan Agriculture contributes $104.7 billion annually to Michigan’s economy.

There are approximately 96,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers (and their families) in Michigan.

Farmworker Definitions

Based on MDHHS policy, a **Migrant Farmworker** is a person who:

- Works or seeks work in agriculture or a related seasonal industry, and
- Moves away from his usual home to a temporary residence as a condition of employment or because the distance from his usual home is greater than 50 miles.

A **Seasonal Farmworker** is a person who:

- Works in agriculture or a related seasonal industry, and
- Is not required to be absent overnight from his permanent place of residence.

**H-2A guestworker** – a farmworker who comes from another country to the U.S. on an H-2A Visa to work in agriculture.

**Domestic farmworker** – a farmworker who migrates domestically within the U.S. to work in agriculture.
Michigan’s Farmworkers

How many migrant & seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs) are in MI?

- 10th largest in nation for number of farmworkers registered for employment with the state ¹
- 94,167 MSFWs and dependents; 61,564 migrants ²
- 27,965 migrant children ages 0-19
- 10,599 migrant children ages 5-12
- 7,718 migrant children under 5

Numbers by County

Top 5 Counties:
(Migrant workers & dependents)

1. Ottawa (9,084)
2. Van Buren (8,527)
3. Oceana (4,738)
4. Berrien (4,496)
5. Allegan (3,458)

NOTE: Map indicates migrant & seasonal workers & dependents.
Question

What areas of the state do you represent? Do you see farmworkers come into your clinics?
Common Chronic Conditions

Based on a survey of farmworkers in Oceana, Kent, and Van Buren Counties by the U of M Michigan Farmworker Project:

Farmworker Health Statistics

Based on a 2021 Migrant Health Survey done by the Ottawa County Department of Public Health of 300 farmworkers:

- 38.2% of migrant farmworkers with chronic pain say their pain is managed well, compared to 79.4% for the general population.
- One in nine (10.8%) migrant farmworkers has diabetes and 8.0% have pre-diabetes; both of these proportions are on par with the general population.
- One in six (15.7%) migrant farmworkers has high blood pressure; of these, half (51.1%) are taking medication for it.
- Almost one-fourth (23.5%) have high blood cholesterol, and of these, 40.7% are taking medication for it.
- 40.8% of migrant farmworkers are obese and 33.1% of migrant farmworkers are overweight.

Migrant Farmworker Health Survey Report 2021, Ottawa County Department of Public Health
Farmworker Health Statistics cont.

Based on a 2021 Migrant Health Survey done by the Ottawa County Department of Public Health of 300 farmworkers:

- Two-thirds (68.9%) of migrant farmworkers have no health care coverage
  - The vast majority of those with coverage have either Medicaid (47.0%) or a plan at work or through a union (38.6%)
  - The top barrier to having coverage is lack of knowledge as to where to go to get/apply for insurance

- Among migrant farmworkers, almost one-fourth (23.3%) had to forgo a needed doctor visit in the past year due to cost;
  - Additionally, 29.6% report having to delay needed medical care in the past year
  - The top reasons cited for delay in getting care are lack of transportation, inability to get an appointment, and cost

- One in six (17.5%) Ottawa County migrant farmworkers have visited an urgent care center or emergency room (ER) in the past year.

Migrant Farmworker Health Survey Report 2021, Ottawa County Department of Public Health
## Farmworker Health Indicators

Comparison of Key Health Status Indicators compared to the 2020 General Ottawa County Adult Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Status Indicators</th>
<th>Migrant Farmworkers (2021)</th>
<th>General Population (2020)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Health Fair/Poor</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Physical Health (14+ days)</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Mental Health (14+ days)</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity Limitation (14+ days)</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obese</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Weight</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving Medication/Treatment for Poor Mental Health</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving Medication/Treatment for Anxiety</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving Medication/Treatment for Depression</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying to lose weight/maintain weight (overweight)</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>74.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying to lose weight/maintain weight (obese)</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have high blood pressure/hypertension</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>26.4% (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have high blood cholesterol</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>26.8% (2014)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Migrant Farmworker Health Survey Report 2021, Ottawa County Department of Public Health
Farmworker Health Challenges

Barriers to Accessing Care and Health Challenges Farmworkers Face:

- Pesticide exposure
- Lack of access to care
- Lack of medical insurance/Cost
- Lack of transportation
- Long Work Days
- Language barrier
  - Indigenous Languages
Health Care Coverage

Currently Have Health Care Coverage

Yes, 31.1%
No, 68.9%

Reasons for No Health Care Coverage

- Don’t know where to go to get/apply for health insurance: 35.3%
- Fear of immigration law enforcement: 23.1%
- Employer doesn’t offer health insurance: 21.2%
- Out-of-pocket costs (e.g., co-pays, spend-downs): 19.2%
- Language barrier (lack of Spanish-speaking staff): 11.5%
- Lack of transportation: 7.1%
- Don’t qualify for Medicaid: 5.8%
- Other: 9.0%

Migrant Farmworker Health Survey Report 2021, Ottawa County Department of Public Health
Emergency Services Only Medicaid Eligibility

- Eligibility requirements include proof of identity and citizenship and meet income and asset guidelines.
- Medicaid Programs vary based on age, family status, and disability status.
- Emergency Services Only Medicaid available to individuals who do not have a citizenship or eligible immigration status for Full Medicaid, such as H-2A Workers (proof of identity and citizenship requirement waived)
Expanded Health Coverage

Emergency Services Only Medicaid Coverage through May 2023 for COVID-19 healthcare includes:

- In-patient and Out-patient
- Tests, vaccinations, and prescriptions

Emergency Services Only Medicaid Coverage for Kidney Dialysis

- Outpatient Dialysis coverage for individuals with End Stage Renal Disease effective 4/1/22

Medicaid Coverage for Pregnant Women Expanded from 2 to 12 months Postpartum
Farmworker Mental Health

Farmworkers can experience feelings of loneliness and isolation while in Michigan and away from their families. Their mental health is important for a safe and healthy workforce.

The following are resources that can assist farmworkers with mental health needs:

- Migrant Health Center
- Community Mental Health
- Local Health Department
- Calling 988, the National Suicide Prevention Line
- Calling the DHHS Farmworker Hotline for referrals 1-833-SIAYUDA
COVID-19 Farmworker Hotline

- MDHHS now has a COVID-19 vaccine information hotline specifically for farmworkers, including agriculture, food processing, dairy production, and nursery/greenhouse.
- Toll-free 1-833-SIAYUDA or 1-833-742-9832.
- The hotline will be used to answer questions about vaccines and connect them with resources and where to get vaccinated. It will also be used for referrals to local DHHS Migrant Program staff for help applying for public benefits, transportation and interpretation needs.
Innovation Brought on by the Pandemic

• Developed new outreach techniques and partnerships.
• Partnerships were formed with Health Departments, FQHCs and other health entities.
• Expanded Medical coverage for those affected by COVID-19.
• Heightened emphasis on health, including mental health services.
• Creation of informational material and resources to help keep farmworkers informed.
COVID-19 Farmworker Resources

KN95 and Cloth Masks

COVID-19 Onsite Testing/Test Kits
- Testing at Welcome Centers

COVID-19 Vaccines
- Partnership with MPCA and FQHC Migrant Health Centers

Student Assistants
COVID-19 General Resources in English and Spanish

Where to locate:

- Protect Michigan Commission
  https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71551_5460_105209_105479---,00.html

- State’s Coronavirus site under Alternate Languages
  https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178_98541_98542---,00.html

- CDC

For additional information:

- www.Michigan.gov/Coronavirus
- www.Michigan.gov/COVIDTest
- www.Michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine
- COVID-19 Hotline 888-535-6136
- Email COVID19@michigan.gov
Question

What health conditions do you see farmworkers face? What strategies have you used to engage farmworkers in your area?
MDHHS Migrant Program Staff

47 DHHS Migrant Program staff housed in 11 counties and providing outreach & services to MSFWs in 48 counties

- Allegan DHHS, Allegan
- Berrien DHHS, Benton Harbor
- Grand Traverse DHHS, Traverse City
- Ingham DHHS, Lansing
- Kent DHHS, Grand Rapids
- Lapeer DHHS, Lapeer
- Lenawee DHHS, Adrian
- Oceana DHHS, Hart
- Ottawa DHHS, Holland
- St. Joseph DHHS, Centreville
- Van Buren DHHS, Hartford
MDHHS Assistance Programs

- Food Assistance
- Medical Assistance (Medicaid, Healthy Michigan Plan, Emergency Services Only)
- Child Development and Care Assistance
- Cash Assistance
- State Emergency Relief
How to Apply

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers are encouraged to get assistance from a DHHS Migrant Program Specialist (MPS) when applying for public benefits to ensure proper assignment.

Other ways to apply for DHHS services:

- In-person at a Local DHHS Office
- Paper Applications – ensure to mark Migrant or Seasonal Farmworker
- Home Calls
- Over the Phone:
  - Medicaid 855-789-5610, Other Programs 800-552-4483
Outreach

DHHS Migrant Program Specialists perform 40% of their time doing outreach during peak season March-October, doing the following activities:

- Transportation and Interpretation
- Migrant Resource Councils
- Camp/Home Visits
- Grower Visits
- Service Provider Networking
Why is outreach important?

Outreach is the single most important way to connect with farmworkers.

Quality outreach equals successful outcomes for farmworkers and their families.

Having outreach specialists that are bilingual and outreach material in Spanish is key in ensuring information is delivered.
Ways to Connect

- Local DHHS Migrant Program Staff
  - Can assist with transportation and interpretation for farmworkers

- Joint outreach with a migrant service provider

- Michigan Migrant Resource Councils to connect with various service providers for farmworkers
Michigan Migrant Resource Councils

Network of 9 Regional Migrant Resource Councils throughout the state, spanning 51 counties.
Monthly meetings held during the peak season with the purpose of:

- Exchanging information on services to farmworkers
- Reducing duplication of services
- Identifying unmet needs of farmworkers and their families
- Establish referral networks
- Coordinate service delivery

Migrant Resource Councils (michigan.gov)
Outreach Opportunities

Michigan Migrant Child Task Force (MCTF)

- Four Outreach Events per year around the state
- Distribute gift bags, books, shirts, toys, diapers/wipes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Date and County</th>
<th>Event Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 28, 2023 – Berrien</td>
<td>Audra Fuentes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:FuentesA@michigan.gov">FuentesA@michigan.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 25, 2023 – Oceana/Mason</td>
<td>Mara Luevano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:LuevanoM@michigan.gov">LuevanoM@michigan.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 9, 2023 – Ottawa</td>
<td>Cynthia Derby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:DerbyC@michigan.gov">DerbyC@michigan.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 13, 2023 – Grand Traverse/Leelanau</td>
<td>Mariza Gamez-Garcia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:GamezGarciaM@michigan.gov">GamezGarciaM@michigan.gov</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question

How can migrant service providers help you reach potential farmworkers in your area?
Thank you!

Questions or Comments?

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www.Michigan.gov/MigrantAffairs
www.Michigan.gov/HelpforMigrants