

Date: August 21, 2020

To: Ingham County area schools and preschools

From: Lisa Chambers, MSW
Vision and Hearing Program Coordinator

RE: Vision and Hearing screenings for the 2020-2021 school year

As a result of the Michigan Public Health Code, the Ingham County Health Department (ICHD) is required to provide vision and hearing screenings for children residing in our community. Upon enrollment in school, parents or guardians are expected to provide the school with a certificate of hearing and vision screening, or statement of exemption.

With the closures of school sites in March 2020, the ICHD Vision and Hearing Technicians were unable to complete screenings for children who will be entering schools this fall. As schools transition to an online presence at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, we wanted to reach out to share our plans for moving forward.

While we await formal guidance from the state, we are hopeful that all children will be allowed to begin their school experience in your building, or enroll with your school virtually. As described on the attached memo from the state of Michigan (highlighted on page two), students should not be denied access to school because the parent did not have the screening completed. If you are concerned about children not being able to begin school, please contact either myself or Dr. Rachel Schumann, the statewide Vision Screening Program Coordinator, whose contact information is listed on the memo.

ICHD expects to be able to provide both vision and hearing screenings later in the year, particularly in light of the lack of kindergarten readiness screenings due to the shutdown. We will reevaluate on an ongoing basis to determine if we can go back to traditional screening opportunities, utilizing strategies and supports to keep both children and staff healthy. However, as you know, all plans are changeable during this time.

As we learn more, we will be sure to continue connect back with sites to update you about our plans for vision and hearing screenings. Please do not hesitate to contact me at Lchambers@ingham.org or 517-272-4122 should you have questions or would like to talk further. I look forward to our continued collaboration during these unprecedented times.