



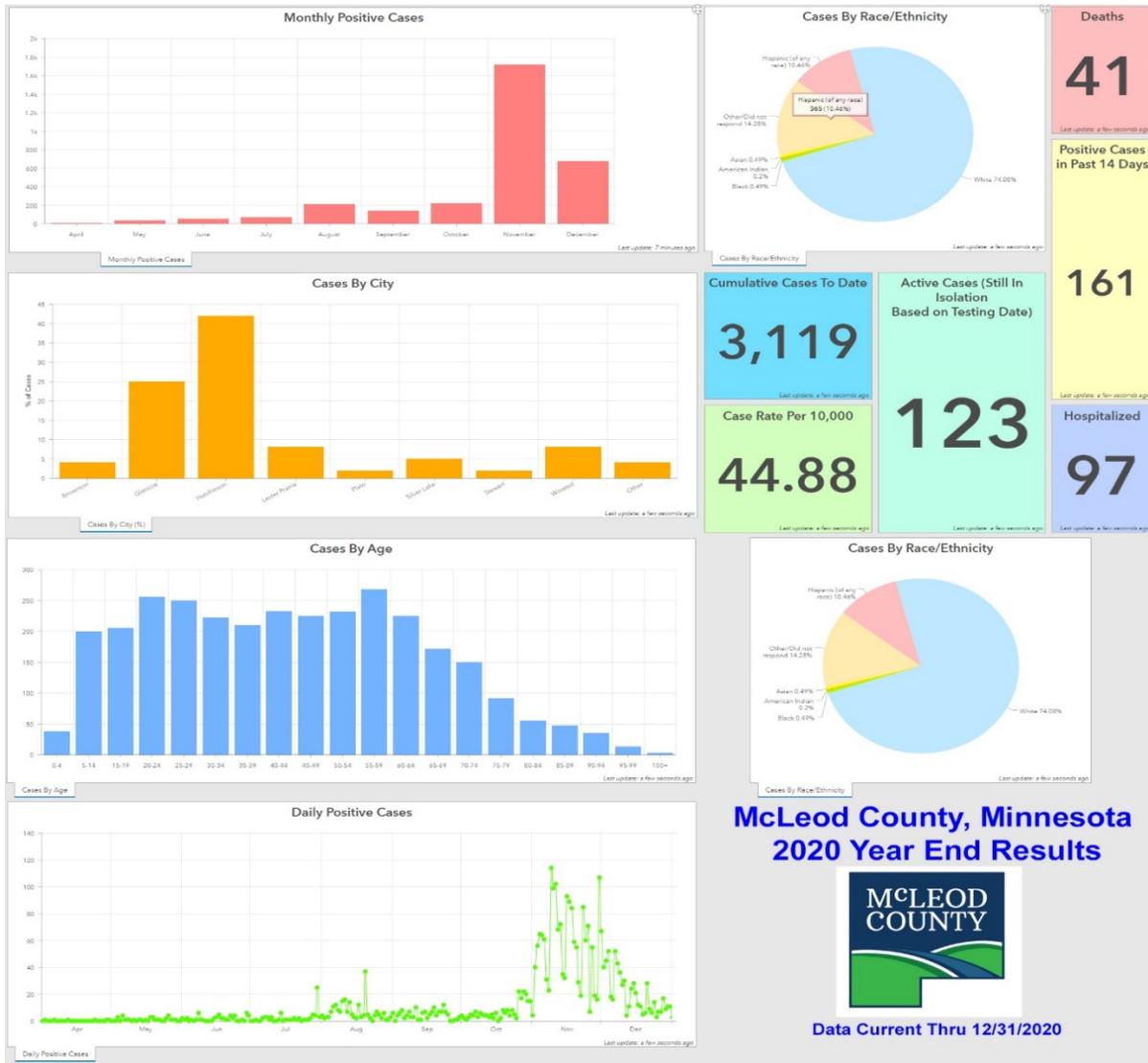
## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### A message from McLeod County Public Health: Recapping 2020 and the 2021 Vaccination Plan

**Glencoe, MN:** McLeod County Public Health would like to recognize that living in the time of COVID-19 has been incredibly difficult and tiring. This virus has affected everyone in one way or another. All of us have worked hard to help protect the people, places, and experiences that matter most. We want to thank you for doing your part! We've seen many partnerships be made or strengthened in 2020, whether that be with our hospitals/clinics, skilled nursing facilities, assisted livings, countless businesses, schools, and so many more. We couldn't do this work without everyone's effort.

Testing has been one way we have worked together to combat COVID-19, as well as practicing the 3 W's – wearing a mask, washing your hands, and watching your distance. 2021 will not be without challenges; we have felt the loss and the sacrifices our communities have faced during 2020. We cannot forget the humanity behind the numbers we see each day related to cases, hospitalizations or deaths related to COVID-19. We feel each loss – these are people in our community, our family members, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. In 2020 alone, sadly, we lost 41 McLeod County residents, 97 residents experienced hospitalizations, and overall McLeod County had 3,119 of cases of COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our way of life. As the seasons transition and the weather gets colder, it is more difficult to connect with others, many people may experience grief and loss. Whether it is the loss of a loved one, grief from missing out on seeing family members, or loss of normalcy and traditions, coping with these feelings can be challenging. We must remain resilient and continue to do our part so we can work towards returning to a more normal way of living and learning. To stay up to date on McLeod specific information, you can reference the dashboard on the county website [www.co.mcleod.mn.us](http://www.co.mcleod.mn.us) (see photo below for reference), as well as, access additional information and resources.



After a challenging year of navigating this pandemic, we are now at a turning point of having a safe and effective vaccine available to our community — a huge step forward in the fight against this virus. The Centers of Disease Prevention and Control (CDC), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and McLeod County Public Health are working hard to create a plan to distribute the vaccine in a way that:

- **Immunizes for impact**, and maximizes immediate health benefits, reduces death and serious illness, and minimizes the harm created by COVID-19
- **Provides Equitable distribution and access**, making sure no procedural or structural issues impact access to the vaccine among any particular group or population. We want Minnesotans in every corner and every community to know they can trust the process, the safety, and the effectiveness of the vaccine.
- **Offers Transparency** and sharing information as quickly as possible with Minnesotans.

McLeod County Government Center

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[www.co.mcleod.mn.us](http://www.co.mcleod.mn.us)



@mcleodcountymn



McLeod County Public Health is a registered vaccine provider through the state health department. We have received an initial shipment of vaccine that is for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) staff, individuals giving vaccinations, and people working at COVID-19 community testing sites. Right now, people who are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine are being notified by their employer or the assisted living or skilled nursing facility where they live. We will provide information once we have it on future priority groups and how they will be notified when they can receive vaccine.

Ultimately, all Minnesotans will have an opportunity to be vaccinated. However, it won't happen all at once. The vaccine is currently not available to the general public. There's not a "list" that Minnesotans need to get on to receive the vaccine. Since phase 1a is based on employment and place of residence, people eligible for this category will be contacted by their employer or the facility where they live to let them know when vaccine is available to them. In later phases, vaccine will be available at settings like your pharmacy or primary care provider, and people will be able to make an appointment to get it. If you would like more information about the COVID-19 vaccine, you can visit the MDH website at

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine.html>