

MAFP Roundtable Draws Media Coverage on Flu Season Worries

On October 16, MAFP hosted a virtual media roundtable, bringing together member physicians from all corners of our state to address the pressing concerns surrounding this year's flu season. They emphasized the importance of early flu vaccination for individuals of all ages. Several area news stations covered the event and papers including the [Detroit News](#) , [Express Healthcare Management](#)

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[WWJ-TV](#)

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[WWMT-TV](#)

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[WDIV-TV](#)

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[WSJM](#),
[WJR Radio](#)

, WWJ Newsradio 950,

[WKZO](#)

, and MIRS, among others.

During the roundtable, MAFP President Beena Nagappala, MD, MPH debunked a common misconception regarding the flu vaccine. She highlighted that children as young as six months and pregnant or breastfeeding women should receive their flu vaccine, particularly because babies have the lowest immunity against the flu.

MAFP Board Member Vincent Winkler-Prins, MD, FAAFP practicing in Petoskey, expressed concerns about the lower flu vaccination rates in rural Michigan. He urged everyone to act promptly, especially in rural areas, given the 19-percentage points difference in vaccination rates between rural and urban children last season.

Member Nirali Bora, MD, MPH, Medical Director of the Kent County Health Department, reminded us that the flu remains a significant public health threat. Last year, 21,000 Americans, including 177 children, tragically lost their lives to the flu. She stressed the importance of the flu vaccine as an effective means of prevention.

Last year, Michigan aimed to vaccinate at least 4 million residents against the flu, but slightly over 3 million were vaccinated. The same goal is set for this flu season, but the state's data reveals a significant lag in flu vaccine administration compared to the last four flu seasons.