



# BERRIEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Third Video in “Play Your Part” Series Addresses Vaccine Hesitancy, Berrien County Health Department Hosts Panel Discussion Feb. 11**

**Benton Harbor, Michigan, Feb. 8, 2022** – The third video in the popular “Play Your Part” series addresses vaccine hesitancy and will debut on Friday, Feb. 11 at noon as part of a panel discussion hosted by the Berrien County Health Department.

BCHD has again partnered with Traci Burton, a Southwest Michigan influencer and the executive producer and creative director, to create a music video that showcases hesitancy, vaccine awareness and the power of relationships in the decision-making process. The five-minute video features an original rap by Benton Harbor resident Jo-Jo Norwood.

Burton will be joined by Diane Young, one of the participants in the video, and representatives from BCHD and Spectrum Health Lakeland for a panel discussion at noon on Feb. 11 on vaccine hesitancy. The community can watch the panel on the BCHD Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/bchdmi>.

“We so appreciate this opportunity to connect with our community and tackle some tough questions related to why some residents choose not to get a vaccine,” said Chioma Ejiofor, the BCHD special projects coordinator. “With record hospitalizations across our community, we want to address misconceptions and remove any roadblocks to someone receiving the vaccine.

“Traci’s video is an engaging way to reach residents and highlight all the reasons we should ‘play our part’ so we can turn this pandemic into an endemic.”

With financial support from United Way of Southwest Michigan and BCHD, Burton has produced a five-minute video set in Martin Temple that begins with Pastor Philander

Martin sharing news that a member of the congregation has contracted COVID and is really struggling. Pastor Martin encourages the congregation to get a vaccine against COVID-19 and lets them know he's available to talk with them to address concerns.

After hearing a question about the vaccine's effectiveness, his wife, Elect Lady Stephanie Rockette-Martin responds and notes there are free clinics throughout Benton Harbor, encouraging the congregation to "do our part" and protect one another – and the community.

Norwood begins his rap, which is interspersed with scenes of the congregation dancing and responding, "hold on – it's gonna get better." Congregants share their individual reasons for why those chose to get the vaccine, from protecting students and co-workers to protecting their legacy and futures.

"If we're going to move forward as a community, we have to make space for hesitancy," Burton said. "This is a very personal decision for many, and we need to understand and address the concerns people have so we can remove barriers and begin true conversations."

Burton and Young will share their personal stories during Friday's panel discussion. They will be joined by Chioma Ejiofor, the special projects coordinator for the Berrien County Health Department, and Betty Moore, a nurse practitioner from Spectrum Health Lakeland.

BCHD offers free vaccine clinics weekly. The adult clinic for ages 12 and older takes place every Tuesday in Benton Harbor and every Thursday in Niles. The children's clinic for ages 5 to 11 is the first and third Wednesday of the month in Benton Harbor and the second and fourth Wednesday of the month in Niles.

The adult clinics are walk-in and run 3-6 p.m. at BCHD's Benton Harbor office, 2149 E. Napier Ave., and 4-6 p.m. at its Niles office, 1205 Front St. The children's clinics are appointment-only and run 3-6 p.m. To schedule an appointment, visit [bchdmi.org/covid19](https://bchdmi.org/covid19).

The adult clinics offer all three COVID-19 vaccines – Johnson & Johnson, Moderna and Pfizer – as well as booster shots for individuals 12 and older. Individuals are eligible for the Pfizer booster five months after they complete the primary two-dose vaccine series. It is recommended teens who received the Pfizer vaccine series stay consistent and receive the Pfizer booster. Individuals 18 and older may receive any U.S.-approved booster.

BCHD also partners with InterCare Community Health Network and Spectrum Health Lakeland to provide vaccine clinics at convenient locations throughout Berrien County.

InterCare's Benton Harbor is available 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday at 800 M-139 and its Eau Claire clinic is open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday at 6270 W. Main St. Both clinics are available without an appointment for anyone 12 years and older. For more information, call 855.869.6900.

For more information about Spectrum Health Lakeland's walk-in and by-appointment clinics, visit [spectrumhealthlakeland.org/covid19](https://spectrumhealthlakeland.org/covid19).

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