**Healthcare resources depend on accurate census data**

What does 2020 census data have to do with a future COVID-19 vaccine?

“U.S. government agencies look at census data to figure out how to allocate resources. If the population of a community is undercounted, it might not get the volume of coronavirus vaccine it needs,” said Rob Santos, vice president and chief methodologist for The Urban Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based research organization, in an interview with Business Insider Today.

“If in a year or two years from now, we finally have vaccines, the first thing that the public health folks are going to do is … look at the census counts by neighborhood and say ‘where do we push out vaccines?’”

It’s a sobering example of how important census data is to every community in the United States -- and how important it is that every American completes the 2020 census.

Healthcare providers and government agencies rely on accurate census information to make decisions about the products and services they provide. An undercounted community runs the risk of not getting the vital healthcare resources it needs.

Here in Michigan, a good portion of the more than $675 billion in annual federal funding flows to major healthcare programs like Medicaid, Medicare, Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). It also funds block grants to individual communities for programs to help people with mental health and substance abuse challenges.

The data is also used by healthcare professionals to determine which communities need new hospitals and healthcare facilities, and the hiring of medical professionals. For example, the Rural Health Program, designed to increase access to primary care services for patients in rural communities, uses census data to define medically underserved, non-urban communities as part of its work to solve rural health issues.

Medical programs that sustain and save lives depend upon a complete census count. As Michiganders, let’s commit to doing our part to take care of our family, friends and neighbors. It takes less than 10 minutes to complete nine questions, and you can do it online at [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov/), over the phone at 1-844-330-2020 (and select your choice of language), or on the paper form mailed to your home.

When everyone counts, everyone wins!

###