



## A closer look at Novella DeGraaf's historic state track and field finals

SPORTS, 1B



# The Holland Sentinel

WEEKEND

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Amanda and Andrew Bashi said their son's combination of heart defects are so rare, there are only a few surgeons nationally with the skill to handle the complexity – and two of them happen to work at University of Michigan's C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. DAVID RODRIGUEZ MUÑOZ/DETROIT FREE PRESS

## Contract deal brings relief for Michigan baby's family

### Patients caught in middle of hospital, insurer dispute

**Kristen Jordan Shamus**  
Detroit Free Press  
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

DETROIT – Relief is how Andrew Bashi, of Detroit, described the feeling that washed over him and his wife, Amanda, upon hearing the news May 27 that Michigan Medicine and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan had reached an agreement on a five-year contract.

Their 7-month-old son, Jibran, had everything to lose as two Goliaths in the state's health care landscape clashed in a monthslong, public contract dispute

that would have forced about 300,000 Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan members out of network with Michigan Medicine if a deal couldn't be reached.

The academic medical center of the University of Michigan set a June 30 deadline to either settle a new contract with the state's dominant insurer, which has about 70% of Michigan's commercial health insurance market, or it would no longer accept commercial Blue Cross insurance plans as in-network.

Caught in the middle were Michigan Medicine patients with commercial Blue Cross plans like Jibran, who was born nearly two months premature in October with a cluster of rare congenital heart defects. Weighing just 2 pounds, 13 ounces at birth, his tiny heart was the size of a peach pit, said

Dr. Jennifer Romano, one of the pediatric cardiac surgeons caring for him at the University of Michigan's C.S. Mott Children's Hospital.

His doctors told the Bashis that Jibran would need a series of carefully timed, complex surgeries to survive – with the first just 10 days after he was born.

Amanda and Andrew Bashi said their son's combination of heart defects are so rare, there are only a few surgeons nationally with the skill to handle the complexity – and two of them happen to work at Mott.

"I remember getting chills when I learned more about the defects and learned how few surgeons can treat them," said Amanda Bashi, 38, a federal

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## County's population sees big growth in 2025

**Mitchell Boatman**  
Holland Sentinel  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Ottawa County's population grew in 2025 – and, according to recently released data, so did most of the region's two dozen municipalities.

According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau shared June 1, an impressive 20 cities, villages and townships saw population growth between 2024 and 2025.

The overall population grew by 2,269 people or 0.7%, bringing the total number of residents in Ottawa County to 308,459. It remains the seventh largest county in Michigan.

In terms of percentage growth, Jamestown Township led the charge for local municipalities for the third

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## Mosquito tests positive for West Nile

**Nida Tazeen**  
The Holland Sentinel  
USA TODAY NETWORK

West Nile has been detected in a mosquito in south central Ottawa County, according to a community announcement.

No human cases have been reported in the municipality so far this year. The

discovery was made during regular summer mosquito monitoring conducted by the Ottawa County Department of Public Health.

West Nile was also recently detected in Kent County – highlighting the importance of taking precautions against mosquito bites.

The virus is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosqui-

to. Most people who contract the virus don't experience symptoms, but some may develop fever, headache, body aches, vomiting, diarrhea or a rash. Serious illness is rare, but can occur, particularly in older adults or individuals with certain health conditions, according to the announcement.

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