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LIVE ON

FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE ANNUAL PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY WILL BE HELD WITHOUT ANY SURVIVORS PRESENT TO SHARE FIRSTHAND ACCOUNTS. **A4**

HEALTH

FDA to remove warning from hormone-based menopause drugs



Advance Local illustration, Shutterstock

The long-standing advisory told doctors that hormone therapy could increase the risk of blood clots and heart problems.

Matthew Perrone Associated Press

Hormone-based drugs used to treat hot flashes and other menopause symptoms will no longer carry a bold warning label about stroke, heart attack, dementia and other serious risks, the Food and Drug Administration announced last month.

U.S. health and drug companies are in the process of removing the boxed warning from more than 20 pills, patches and creams containing hormones like estrogen and progesterone, which are approved to ease disruptive symptoms like night sweats.

The change has been supported by some doctors — including FDA Commissioner Marty Makary, who has called the current label outdated and unnecessary.

Health officials explained the move by pointing to studies suggesting hormone therapy has few risks when started before age 60 or within 10 years of menopause symptoms.

“We’re challenging outdated thinking and recommitting to evidence-based medicine that empowers rather than restricts,” Health Secretary Robert F.



“Hormone replacement therapy may improve the health outcomes of women at a population level more than any other intervention arguably with the exception of, say, antibiotics or vaccines,” says FDA Commissioner Martin Makary. AP file

Kennedy Jr. said in introducing the update.

The 22-year-old FDA warning advised doctors that hormone therapy can increase the risk of blood clots, heart problems and other health issues, citing data published more than 20 years ago.

Many doctors — and pharmaceutical companies — have called for removing or revising the label, which they say

discourages prescriptions and scares off women who could benefit.

Dr. Steven Fleischman, president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, said the warnings have created a lot of hesitancy among patients.

“I can spend 30 minutes counseling someone about hormone-replacement therapy— tell them everything — but when they fill the prescription and see that warning they just get scared,” Fleischman said.

Other experts have opposed making changes to the label without a careful, transparent process.

Medical guidelines generally recommend the drugs for a limited duration in younger women going through menopause who don’t have complicating risks, such as breast cancer. FDA’s updated prescribing information mostly matches that approach.

But Makary and some other doctors have suggested that hormone therapy’s benefits can go far beyond managing uncomfortable mid-life symptoms. Before becoming FDA commissioner, Makary dedicated a chapter of his most recent book to extolling the overall benefits of hormone therapy and criticizing doctors unwilling to prescribe it.

Recently he reiterated that viewpoint, citing figures suggesting hormone-therapy reduces heart disease, Alzheimer’s and other age-related conditions.

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ELECTION 2026 GOVERNOR

Poll: James, Benson lead; Duggan takes from Dems

Detroit’s mayor was elected as a Democrat but now is running as an independent.

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Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson and Congressman John James are the top Democrat and Republican candidates in the 2026 race for Michigan governor, according to newly released polling of the crowded field.

Each candidate received 48% of the support in their respective primaries.

But when pitted against each other in a November general election scenario, U.S. Rep. John James, R-Shelby Township, comes out ahead with a six-point lead.

That’s partially because Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan, elected as a Democrat but running for governor as an independent candidate, pulls more Democratic votes than he does from the GOP.

The survey, conducted Nov. 18-21, was released Dec. 2 by public affairs and communications firm Mitchell Research & Communications. It was sponsored by Michigan Information & Research Service (MIRS).

The early polling asked 616 likely November general election voters about their top issues and frontrunner candidates via text message and online survey. The survey has a margin of error of 3.7%.

VOTERS’ PRIORITIES

Of those who responded, 36% said the economy or inflation was the single most important issue facing the state of Michigan now that would have an impact on their vote for governor.

Another 16% said “threats to Democracy,” while 10% said crime or policing, 10% said health care, 6% said climate change or the environment, 6% said abortion and 5% said roads or traffic. Another 5% said unsure or another issue not mentioned.

Thirty-six percent of those who responded were Democrats, 36% were Republicans and 28% were independents.

When asked about the candidates, those same voters favored James 37% of the time.

Thirty-one percent of voters picked Secretary of State Benson, and 18% picked Duggan. Another 14% were unsure.

Of note is that Duggan took 16% of his support from self-identified Democrats, compared with 10% of Republicans supporting him.

At the same time, 6% of Democrats remained unsure, compared with 14% of GOP voters.

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Report: State’s special education services lag U.S.

Thousands more students getting help in recent years.

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Michigan kids in need of special education services in public schools are disproportionately affected by exclusion from prekindergarten education, higher drop-out rates and a lack of support for their parents, according to a state-level report out last week.

The Autism Alliance of Michigan (AAoM) released its first special education benchmark report Wednesday, citing uneven program access and learning outcomes across the state — particularly, when compared with national averages — amid a nearly 7% rise in the number

of students with disabilities over the past several years.

According to the Michigan Department of Education, the number of students with disabilities who have received special education services has gone from 208,543 in 2018-19 to 223,100 during the 2024-25 school year.

More than 27% of those students reportedly had a speech and language impairment last year, 25.1% had another specific learning disability, 13.5% had autism, and 7.6% had a cognitive impairment.

Although the Autism Alliance uses state data as of last year, some of the

latest student group calculations are from 2022-23 and 2023-24. Among pre-school-age children with disabilities, the alliance reported 21%, as of two years ago, received at least 10 hours of special education and related services in their regular early childhood program.

That’s compared with the national average of 43%.

The proportion of those who received special ed services at home was 2% across Michigan and the U.S. in 2023-24.

Meanwhile, 44% in Michigan received those services in other environments, such as separate schools or residential

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