



Communicable Disease Branch Local Health Department Monthly Webinar Key Points – March 12, 2024

The North Carolina Division of Public Health (NC DPH) Communicable Disease Branch will be releasing key points that include information discussed on the monthly Tuesday Local Health Department call. Please use the information below as a summary of the topics presented on the call. As guidance changes, please use the most recent information provided. For questions, contact the NC DPH Communicable Disease Branch 24/7 Epidemiologist on Call at **919-733-3419**.

Important Updates

- Available online at [NC Communicable Disease Manual - Other Diseases of Public Health Significance \(ncdhhs.gov\)](https://ncdhhs.gov/nc-communicable-disease-manual)
- **New:** NCDHHS LHD Monthly Webinar 03 12 2024.pdf
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Video recording: <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/922578947/c075e45538>

Question & Answers

Q. The new isolation guidance is the same for Schools?

A. Yes, the CDC's updated Viral Respiratory Guidance applies to schools.

Q. Hi all, in reference to these new CDC guidelines, specifically as it pertains to K-12, are we still asking them to follow individual cases (of staff and students) in an effort to report clusters?

A. Individual COVID-19 cases are not reportable, but K-12 schools fall under the cluster guidance and five or more cases in a school should result in the school or LHD determining if the cases are epi-linked and need to be reported. If they would like to do this by following individual cases, they are free to do that, but they only need to report clusters.

Q. Can you paste the CDC URL again for health care settings?

A. The slides with the links will be sent out after the call.

Q. Any timeline on when cases will stop falling into NCCOVID for acknowledgement?

A. I do not have a set timeline for when the workflows will stop populating, but LHDs do not need to acknowledge cases that flow in.

Q. Does the new Respiratory Virus Guidance apply to childcare facilities and children under 5 as well?

A. Yes, this guidance applies to school and childcare facilities. CDC plans to release school specific guidance prior to the 2024-2025 school year, but this guidance will align with the new Viral Respiratory Guidance.

Q. Is CDC National Immunization Survey data available at the county level? If so, where do we find that information (with graphs)?

A. Here is the link to the CDC COVID-19 National Immunization Survey data - <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-managers/coverage/covidvaxview/index.html>
Unfortunately, it is just the state level (and some large metro areas)

Q. I had to step away for a moment - I realize the USPS program has been suspended. Was an anticipated end date for access to test through our HPOP account mentioned? Or is this program continuing until further notice?

A. The federal direct ordering program is continuing until further notice. At this time, we have not been provided with an end date for this program. I would encourage LHDs, and other organizations to order tests as needed while the program remains in place.

Q. With the changes to COVID guidelines happening...and not filing individual cases. Do you think we will stop filing outbreaks?

A. No, we anticipate continuing to get reports of COVID-19 outbreaks similar to how we get reports of outbreak of other non-reportable conditions such as norovirus and flu.

Q. If a doctor's office faxes a LHD, for instance an STI CD form with treatment and symptom info but the patient resides in another county, are we able to fax this to the county they reside in? If we search the person in NCEDSS and they are not there and then create a new case but the person is already in there, we cannot enter the treatment info or assign it to another county if this is not our resident. I was told we are not allowed to send records to another LDH because it is a HIPAA violation because it is not a record that belongs to us, even though it is pertaining to a reportable disease. Is this true?

A. Physicians are only required to report to the county in which they are practicing when making a report of a reportable illness. On the NC CD Manual, and in NCEDSS training, the following is the standard operating procedure for your question, "Cases that are reported to a LHD that are the jurisdiction of another county or state to report should be entered into NC EDSS with all available information. Those belonging to another county should be reassigned to that county; those belonging to another state should be assigned to the state disease registrar designated as the responsibility of another state or country to report."

That document can be found here <https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/lhds/manuals/cd/ncedss/EntryofEvents.pdf> I realize this is an older document, however, it is still correct.

Some helpful tips:

- You can search by person and see all people who are in the NCEDSS; however local users cannot see ALL cases due to jurisdictional restrictions. So to enter a faxed case report for another county, you search for the person, use the appropriate profile from searching that matches, or if none is found, create the person profile then the event.
- You can and should enter in ALL the information that is received into the event, then when you are completely done with entering all the information, ensure that the County of Residence in the administrative package is changed to the county that the person resides in and you are sending to.
- The first box in the admin trail should be the LHD that is entering the event information, ensuring that contact information is completed in case the receiving LHD has a question, then populate the second box and put in the receiving LHD.
- The event will not go to the receiving LHD if you do not ensure that the county of residence is the receiving county. It will remain in your workflow until this is done. Once this is done, you will not be able

to go back into the event once you close it, so ensure that ALL details are complete before closing the event for transfer.

- Sharing this information between LHDs is not a HIPAA violation. Please refer to [this](#) and your local HIPAA officer for more information.
- Please go [here](#) and review slides 12-24 for more information on transferring events

Next Meeting

Tuesday, 4/9/2024