



## **Communicable Disease Branch Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Weekly Key Points**

**May 18, 2021**

The North Carolina Division of Public Health (NC DPH) Communicable Disease Branch will be releasing COVID-19 weekly key points that includes information discussed on the weekly Tuesday Local Health Department call. Recordings of the call will not be made available; 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**

- **New:** NCDHHS LHD Weekly Webinar 5 18 2021.pdf (file attached)
- **Updated:** Local Health Vaccine FAQ – 5.14.21.pdf (file attached)
- **Updated:** Find My Testing Place (file attached)

### **Policy/Equity/State Health Director Update**

- New EO - [https://files.nc.gov/governor/documents/files/EO215-Lifting-COVID-19-Restrictions\\_0.pdf](https://files.nc.gov/governor/documents/files/EO215-Lifting-COVID-19-Restrictions_0.pdf)
- New Clinical Guidelines for COVID-19 Vaccines - <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/clinical-considerations.html>
- New CDC guidance for people who are fully vaccinated (including removing mask use and social distancing requirements in most settings) - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>
- **COVID Vaccine for Homebound List:** We maintain a [list of vaccine providers who support COVID vaccines for homebound people](#). The new contact here at NC DHHS to update or edit the list is Stacy Hurley, [stacy.hurley@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:stacy.hurley@dhhs.nc.gov)

### **Epi Picture**

- Incidence of reported cases down to 70 per 100,000 residents for the week ending 5/15. This is the lowest rate since June 2020.
- Percent of specimens testing positive by PCR and other metrics of virus spread also trending down at the state and national levels.
- NC is approaching one million reported cases of COVID-19. [Seroprevalence estimates posted by CDC](#) (and estimates from longitudinal seroprevalence surveys in NC) suggest the actual number of infections is >2.7 million (25% of the population).

### **NC Wastewater Monitoring Network**

North Carolina Wastewater Monitoring Network:

- NCDHHS is announcing the NC Wastewater Monitoring Network and planning rollout of this NEW metric on the COVID-19 data dashboard Friday 5/21.



- Wastewater monitoring has been ongoing in 11 jurisdictions across the state since Jan 2021, as part of North Carolina's participation in the [CDC's National Wastewater Surveillance System](#). The program is expanding to include more geographic representation this summer.
- By testing a community's wastewater, we can measure the amount of the virus in a community-wide sample and see whether levels of the virus are increasing, decreasing, or staying the same.
- Wastewater monitoring includes asymptomatic and symptomatic individuals and is not reliant on testing or health care utilization.
- Public health actions can be taken using these data, for example:
  - **Increasing trend:**
    - Mobilize additional pop-up testing resources
    - Increase public health communication and outreach about how individuals can protect themselves from COVID-19
    - Alert hospitals, clinics, and local physicians that an increase in the virus that causes COVID-19 has been observed
    - Provide recommendations to community leaders or take direct actions on implementation of restrictions
  - **Decreasing trend or below detection:** confirm with a supplemental metric that infections are low in the community – independent of how much testing is being conducted
  - **Plateau:** sustain or increase public health recommendations depending on the level of virus being detected
- Contact Virginia Guidry ([virginia.guidry@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:virginia.guidry@dhhs.nc.gov)) or Ariel Christensen ([ariel.christensen@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:ariel.christensen@dhhs.nc.gov)) with any questions.

## **Infection Prevention**

### IP Guidance Clarification for Fully Vaccinated People:

- CDC updated the [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#) (May 13<sup>th</sup>) to advise that fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask or physically distance in any setting, except where required by federal, state, local, or tribal laws, rules, and regulations.
- The updated guidance on masking is directed towards the general community and **does not apply to certain settings including healthcare, childcare and school settings, correctional facilities, and homeless shelters.**
- **Staff, patients, residents, visitors, and children must continue to wear masks as recommended in these settings.**
- There has been no change in recommendations regarding testing and quarantine following prolonged close contact with someone infected with SARS-CoV-2 for healthcare personnel, patients, and residents, regardless of vaccination status.
- Healthcare facilities should continue to refer to the [Updated Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations in Response to COVID-19 Vaccination](#) (April 27<sup>th</sup>) for recommendations regarding source control, physical distancing, testing, and quarantine.
- Testing (but not quarantine) is still recommended following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 for fully vaccinated residents and employees of correctional facilities and homeless shelters.



## **Farmworkers**

### Farmworker Vaccination Efforts Insights & Data (through 5/7/21)

- 88 local teams reporting
- 6 reception hub events
- 94% accepted vaccine (based on reported data)
- Vaccination efforts target migrant and seasonal workers but are inclusive of year-round farm staff and growers.
- Recent severe weather damaged most of the state's blueberry crop. As a result, fewer than expected migrant workers will be arriving and receiving the vaccine in the southeastern part of the state.

Outcome	Local Teams	Reception Hub	Total
Doses Administered	10,286	1,280	11,566
Number fully vaccinated	4,573	940	5,513

## **CVMS Updates**

- A presentation of the new features added in CVMS with the release 7 is available at <https://youtu.be/Tx8hP5QPNCQ>

## **Find My Testing Place**

Please review the updated 'Find My Testing Place LHD' Excel file weekly to ensure information is up to date and accurate. Please send the updated files or any related questions to [SVC\\_Covid-19TestingSites@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:SVC_Covid-19TestingSites@dhhs.nc.gov)