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

September 29, 2020

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_9.29.2020 FINAL.pdf (file attached)
- **New:** COVID-19 Vaccination Program Provider Agreement and Profile Form (file attached)
- **New:** Steps for Local Staff to Submit New Outbreaks and Clusters to Communicable Disease Branch Using REDCap (file attached)
- **New:** Local Public Health COVID-19 Vaccination FAQs (file attached)
- **New:** Non-Congregate Sheltering Program Overview (file attached)
- **New:** Non-Congregate Sheltering Overview – Growers Guide (file attached)
- **Updated:** Find My Testing Place (file attached)

Long Term Care Facilities Update

NC DHHS issued a Secretarial Order updating visitation guidelines to allow indoor visitation in all nursing facilities and residential long-term care facilities with 7 or more beds as consistent with federal guidance. The Secretarial Order requires nursing homes/skilled-nursing facilities to follow CMS guidance on visitation. CMS guidance on visitation specifies that indoor visitation in nursing homes/skilled nursing facilities can occur if there are no cases in the last 14 days and the facility is not located in a county with high percent positivity per federal rates. The Secretarial Order also requires all long term care facilities with 7 or more beds, including nursing homes, to follow additional DHHS guidance on visitation here.

Hepatitis A Update

As you know we have been experiencing a hepatitis A outbreak in North Carolina, in conjunction with the national outbreak associated with people who use drugs, people experiencing homelessness, and men who have sex with men. We've observed a marked increase in reported hepatitis A cases associated with the statewide outbreak in 2020 (207 just in 2020 compared to approximately 300 total since March 2018). The percentage of individuals hospitalized remains at 65%. If support is needed for patient contact, outreach efforts, vaccine efforts planning (in conjunction with Immunization Branch), or hygiene and safer drug user supplies, please feel free to reach out to the Viral Hepatitis Program (christina.caputo@dhhs.nc.gov) or the vaccine preventable disease. We very much want to help support you in these efforts.

Non-Congregate Sheltering Program

The **North Carolina Non-Congregate Sheltering (NCS) program** is a collaborative effort between the State of North Carolina, counties, and local partners to secure shelter and essential wrap-around services for individuals with no other safe place to quarantine, isolate, or social distance due to COVID-19. Although the State of North Carolina is providing financial resources to support NCS in the community, this program relies heavily on counties partners including County Emergency Management, Local Health Departments (LHD), County Departments of Social Services, and non-profit agencies to establish and operate NCS at a county level. This document is intended to give an overview of the program, provide guidance on how partners can run an NCS shelter, outline the reimbursement process for costs associated with an NCS shelter, and connect individuals to NCS shelters in their counties. Attached are two documents: An overview of the NCS program and a guide targeted to **grower's who need support in identifying and providing safe farmworker housing options (see attachment).**

Outbreak Reporting in NC COVID - Update

- Please do not create outbreak or cluster events in NC COVID. Let the state staff do this because we need to keep the data entry for outbreaks and clusters consistent and systematic.
- Use this link (https://is.gd/COVIDOutbreaks) to report outbreaks and clusters. A state staff person will send you the NC COVID ID# after they create an outbreak or cluster event in NCCOVID for you. Please update any communication or documents to reflect this process to applicable staff. The old method of emailing outbreak worksheets to DHHS no longer applies and that inbox is no longer being monitored.
- The web tables that names facilities with outbreaks or clusters in childcare and K-12 is a living document. We need your help to keep it current because people are making decisions about reimbursement and some visitation policies based on a facility being on/off this list. If you know an outbreak has ended but is still listed as active on the web table please let us know by emailing Neeti.Karmacharya@dhhs.nc.gov.

Vaccination Program Provider Agreement

CDC has released the COVID-19 Vaccination Program Provider Agreement. A copy is attached for your reference. Please do not use this copy to submit. We will send instructions on completing and returning of signed copies soon. We are providing this to give you a start at collecting the required information. We will begin the enrollment process with local health departments and hospitals and expand in the near future. You will note that this agreement, much like existing VFC agreements, requires a signature from the Chief Medical Officer or equivalent as well as the Chief Executive or Chief Fiduciary Officer. This agreement also asks several vaccine storage questions. As a reminder, we do not recommend, nor does CDC, purchasing cold chain vaccine storage equipment at this time. Though we are sending the enrollment agreements to hospitals and local health departments right now, we do encourage all local health departments to make sure they are reviewing lists from pandemic flu plans and H1N1 experience to make sure they have a full picture of providers in their community that may serve as vaccine access points.

Vaccination Updates

Enrollment Update: We continue to work on an electronic mechanism for COVID-19 Provider enrollment. We expect to provide enrollment details next week to LHDs and hospitals.

Advisory Work: The NC Institute of Medicine has formed a COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory group to help with several aspects of vaccine planning. The first work is related to prioritization of vaccine. We are making a final review of the prioritization draft this week. The framework will continue to be draft and will be review when CDC and ACIP provide their prioritization framework for COVIE-19 Vaccine. Look for more information on prioritization early next week.

LHD FAQ: Local health departments can begin sending COVID-19 vaccine related questions to covidvac@dhhs.nc.gov Questions will be answered and reviewed by SMEs and sent out weekly with the weekly points email.

State Laboratory of Public Health Update

During the weekly LHD call, there were some questions related to getting rapid tests, particularly antigen testing. Below, you will find appropriate links to rapid and antigen testing.
- Information on the BD Veritor System for rapid detection of SARS-CoV-2: https://www.bdveritor.com/the-bd-veritor-system/
- Information on the Quidel Sofia SARS Antigen FIA for rapid detection of SARS-CoV-2: https://www.quidel.com/immunoassays/rapid-sars-tests/sofia-sars-antigen-fia
- Information on Abbott rapid testing using ID NOW or BinaxNOW: https://www.globalpointofcare.abbott/en/lp/covid-19.html
- Information on CLIA Waived Tests: https://www.cdc.gov/labquality/waived-tests.html
- Information on CLIA team in NC: https://info.ncdhhs.gov/dhsr/ahc/clia/index.html

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