November 20, 2020 Update

Surveillance
- COVID-19 data, additional health information and relevant updates to Tennesseans are available at COVID19.tn.gov.
- COVID-19 data by county are available in data snapshots by county.
- The weekly Critical Indicators Report includes information to help stakeholders monitor trends in cases, symptoms, testing capabilities and health care system capacity.
- COVID-19 hospitalizations represent 20% of all hospitalized patients in TN. Hospitalizations continue to increase, and TDH and the UCG are working closely with hospitals across the state to ensure adequate staffing and bed capacity.

Response
- The UCG is making more COVID-19 testing options available for Tennesseans statewide leading up to and just after Thanksgiving. The Tennessee Department of Health and the Tennessee National Guard will extend operating hours at 35 county health departments, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., local time, on Monday, Nov.23 and Monday, Nov. 30.
- Tennessee has been selected to participate in a pilot program for delivery of Pfizer Inc. COVID-19 vaccine now under development. Tennessee will participate along with New Mexico, Rhode Island and Texas. This program is designed to address distribution challenges posed by requirements for ultra-cold storage of the vaccine. Lessons learned through this program will help support all states in development of effective immunization programs for this COVID-19 vaccine.
- Governor Bill Lee announced a new ad campaign, "Choices" to promote responsible decision-making by Tennesseans as the state continues to fight the spread of COVID-19.
- The Tennessee Department of Health announced the state's infrastructure plan for distribution of COVID-19 vaccines once they become available. TDH in coordination with other state and local agencies submitted an initial draft of the COVID-19 Vaccination Plan for Tennessee to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Tennessee's Economic Recovery Group issued updated guidance for businesses and other activities under the Tennessee Pledge. The updated and streamlined guidance aligns with recent amendments to state-issued Executive Orders and enable Tennessee businesses to operate with more flexibility where social distancing protocols remain in place.

Ongoing TDH Activities
- Supporting COVID-19 assessments at local health departments.
- Operating information lines for public inquiries and maintaining a clinician's consultation line.
- Sharing information via social media networks and the TDH COVID-19 webpage and conducting telebriefings for healthcare providers, hospitals, and partner agencies.
- Investigating cases, tracing contacts, and monitoring cases and contacts.
- Utilizing the Healthcare Resource Tracking System to monitor COVID-19 hospitalization numbers, personal protective equipment inventories and strain on the healthcare system.
- Recruiting medical professionals through the Medical Reserve Corps Program.
- Supporting state laboratory testing.
- Organizing distribution of rapid antigen test kits to vulnerable populations.

Important Reminders
- COVID-19 tests are free to all in local health departments.
- A hotline is available for frontline healthcare workers, implemented by the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.
- The Tennessee Pledge: a plan to help Tennesseans return to work in a safe environment, restore their livelihoods and reboot the state's economy.
- CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings.
- Stay away from people who are sick and stay home when you are sick. Wash your hands often with soap and water (or alcohol-based hand rub) for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing or sneezing.

Recent Guidance from CDC
- New: Travel Planner | Travel Planner Instructions for Health Departments | Ensuring COVID-19 Vaccines Work | Social Media Toolkit: Holidays | This Holiday Season Do What's Best for You and Your Loved Ones