December 4, 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 25% 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

- Governor Bill Lee joined Vice President Mike Pence in Memphis on Dec. 3 in a discussion about Operation Warp Speed and the CDC's vaccine distribution program, and Tennessee's plan to initiate vaccinations once approved.
- 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 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, according to CDC's recent Prioritization Recommendations. Implementing recent Options to Reduce Quarantine.
- 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 reestablish 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: What Long-Haul Truck Driver Employees Need to Know about COVID-19 | NCHS Mortality Surveillance Data | Percentage of Outpatient and Emergency Department Visits for ILI and CLII | U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet): Percentage of Visit for ILI by Age Group | Number of Specimens Tested and Percent Positive for SARS-CoV-2 | Protect your Home from COVID-19