October 16, 2020 Update

**Surveillance**

- COVID-19 data by county are available in [data snapshots by county](https://example.com).
- 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 ~11% of all hospitalized patients in TN, and hospital capacity remains stable across Tennessee.

**Response**

- Governor Bill Lee and Education Commissioner Penny Schwinn called for [removing negative consequences](https://example.com) for schools and educators associated with student assessments for the 2020-2021 school year.
- Tennessee's Economic Recovery Group issued updated guidance for businesses and other activities under the [Tennessee Pledge](https://example.com). 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:
  - Instead of recommending strict capacity limitations for attractions and entertainment, guidelines focus on case-by-case flexibility and provide examples for incorporating social distancing.
  - Focus on preventing COVID-19 transmission from close physical contact rather than surface transmission, though regular disinfection and hand hygiene remain important.
- Governor Bill Lee announces $50 million in new business relief funding. The program's application window will open October 7, 2020 and remain open until December 29, 2020, or until all funds are depleted.
- Governor Bill Lee announced on September 30th, the State of Emergency in Tennessee will continue through October with adjustments made to previous executive orders:
  - [Executive Order No. 63](https://example.com), extending certain, targeted provisions of previous executive orders through October 30 including the authority of local governments to institute mask requirements.
  - [Executive Order No. 64](https://example.com), extending through October 30 provisions that allow for remote notarization and witnessing of documents.
  - [Executive Order No. 60](https://example.com), which extends through October 28 provisions that allow for electronic government meetings subject to transparency safeguards, including the requirement of live broadcasts of electronic meetings to the public beginning October 1, remains in effect.
- Tennessee Department of Education’s dashboard on COVID-19 cases in schools is now live.

**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.
- Organize distribution of rapid antigen test kits to vulnerable populations

**Important Reminders**

- COVID-19 tests are free to all in local health departments.
- A [hotline](https://example.com) is available for frontline healthcare workers, implemented by the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.
- The [Tennessee Pledge](https://example.com): 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](https://example.com) 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**