March 05, 2021 Update

Surveillance
- COVID-19 case data, health information and relevant updates to Tennesseans are available at COVID19.tn.gov.
- COVID-19 vaccination data are available here.
- 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 8% of all hospitalized patients in TN. Hospitalizations continue to decrease. TDH and UCG are working closely with hospitals across the state to ensure adequate staffing and bed capacity.

Response
- The Tennessee Department of Health has completed a process review of state COVID-19 vaccine administration to minimize possible waste and support providers receiving greater supplies of vaccine ahead of opening eligibility to Phase 1c. Tennessee will open vaccination eligibility to those in Phase 1c populations on March 8. Phase 1c of Tennessee’s COVID-19 Vaccination Plan includes people with high-risk health conditions including pregnancy, and parents and caregivers of children with high-risk health conditions. Tennesseans may find vaccination providers in their area by visiting VaccineFinder.org.
- The Tennessee Department of Health is working with partners in Shelby County to ensure continued equitable and efficient distribution of COVID-19 vaccines in the community. Vaccination appointments are currently being scheduled in Shelby County for residents eligible for the vaccination. Individuals seeking vaccination in Shelby County can visit https://covid19.tn.gov/covid-19-vaccines/vaccination-locations/.
- State-specific visitation restrictions for long-term care facilities ended Feb. 28. Facilities should use the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services guidance for safe operation and visitation.
- Tennessee began registering Tennesseans aged 65 and older and those in Phase 1b of the state's COVID-19 Vaccination Plan for COVID-19 vaccinations on Feb. 22. Phase 1b includes staff members of kindergarten through 12th grade schools and child care facilities.
- Tennessee will see expanding access to COVID-19 vaccination with the launch of the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program for COVID-19 Vaccination. These vaccinations will be provided at no cost to patients and will be available by appointment only. These pharmacies will follow the vaccination plan phasing of the counties in which they are located. For details on locations, visit www.walmart.com/covidvaccine.

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 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.