September 04, 2020 Update

Surveillance

- Please visit the TDH COVID-19 webpage for Tennessee's most up-to-date case count and CDC's COVID View: a weekly surveillance summary of U.S. COVID-19 activity. TDH also produces a Critical Indicators report that is updated weekly.
- Numerous counties have seen an increase in COVID-19 cases. Information by county is available online.
- Although COVID-19 hospitalizations have increased in many parts of the state, they represent ~9% of all hospitalized patients in TN, and hospital capacity remains stable across Tennessee.

Response

- Governor Bill Lee signed the following, effective through September 30, 2020:
  - Executive Order No. 59, extending provision that facilitate the continued treatment and containment of COVID-19 through regulatory flexibility, promotion of social distancing and wearing face coverings in public places, and protection of vulnerable populations.
  - Executive Order No. 60, extending provisions that allow for electronic government meetings, as long as electronic access is also provided for the public.
  - Executive Order No. 61, extending provisions that allow for remote notarization and witnessing of documents.
- Funding in the amount of $61 million is available for projects that will enhance broadband access in areas that lack all equipment needed to provide a broadband connection that can support telemedicine, distance learning, and telecommuting.
- Using federal Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF), new and expanded financial relief funds have been made available for small businesses, agribusinesses, displaced workers, and the tourism industry:
  - The Tennessee Small Business Relief Program has been expanded to additional businesses. An additional $83.5 million has been added to its initial $200 million allotment.
  - To help ensure stability of the food supply chain and agribusiness economy, a new economic support program will be established for agricultural and forestry businesses.
  - Twenty-five million dollars from the CRF will be utilized to remarket and support the State's tourism industry recovery.
  - An additional $9.5 million will be allocated to programs providing re-employment services to a proposed 17,000 participants.
- Additional resources have been made available to assist schools with re-opening, including funding for school districts to purchase Wi-Fi and Mi-Fi devices for their students, a teacher PPE dashboard, the Best for All Central learning and teaching hub, a family remote learning site, and a foundational skills site to support early literacy.

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.

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