



July 10, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) is providing this update regarding the COVID-19 outbreak. Visit our [webpage](#) for the most up to date information on case counts, information, and resources.

Counseling and reporting cases

As the volume of cases grows, we are requesting your assistance as you identify cases of COVID-19 infection among your patients. Please counsel COVID-19 positive patients to 1) remain isolated at home throughout their infectious period (a minimum of 10 days from symptom onset) and 2) notify their close contacts of their exposure, and the recommendation for close contacts to quarantine at home for 14 days following their exposure. **Public health needs your assistance in sharing these important messages to reduce transmission.**

One-pagers in English and Spanish are available [here](#).

- What to Expect After Being Diagnosed: [English](#) / [Spanish](#)
- What to Expect After Being Tested (while waiting for results): [English](#) / [Spanish](#)
- What to Expect if you were Possibly Exposed: [English](#) / [Spanish](#)

Report cases to TDH according to the [guidance here](#).

TDH Response and Clarification Regarding HHS Letter: Health and Human Services (HHS) recently sent out a letter titled [COVID-19 Pandemic Response, Laboratory Data Reporting: CARES Act Section 18115](#) (June 4, 2020). This letter was intended to support and compel the electronic reporting of laboratory results for all COVID test and result types. Throughout the current pandemic, our healthcare and public health systems have been strained trying to care for patients and communities while at the same time monitor exposed individuals and track the spread of disease to inform control measures. These efforts are hindered by the manual flow of data and information on COVID-19 cases and exposed individuals through multiple agencies, jurisdictions, and facilities. This HHS letter aims to address one of those areas for improvement which is to further define the minimum data elements for reporting, entities responsible for reporting, and methods by which that information can be submitted electronically. In [this memo](#) TDH explains how the agency is responding to these new HHS requirements and expectations of partners conducting laboratory testing for COVID. Please review the [memo](#) and consult the [FAQs](#) for additional insight. TDH will regularly update the [FAQs](#) and guidance documents once the national technical guidance is released. Future updates will be posted to: <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/reportable-diseases.html>

Change in PPE recommendations

CDC has updated [recommendations](#) to include eye protection (in addition to standard precautions) for healthcare providers working in facilities in areas with moderate to substantial community

transmission, due to the increased likelihood of encountering asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic patients with SARS-CoV-2.

Understanding the spread of COVID-19 in your community

COVID-19 cases are continuing to increase and be investigated throughout the state. We have a number of resources on our webpage to help you understand current transmission in your community. All data and visualizations are updated daily unless otherwise indicated.

- [Daily summary](#) (downloadable pdf) of cumulative case counts, demographics, outcomes
- Cumulative and recent [case counts](#) by region and by county
- Cumulative [case and testing rates](#) by region and by county
- Daily counts of currently [hospitalized](#) COVID-19 patients and available hospital [capacity](#)

Thank you for all that you do in keeping Tennesseans safe and healthy.

Tennessee Department of Health