

**CSTE COVID-19 Response Programmatic Update****CSTE Executive Board Meeting, Winter 2022****COVID-19 Response Activities**

CSTE activated its Concept of Operations (ConOps) Plan in response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak on January 22, 2020; staff continue to support COVID-19 response activities. A summary of programmatic response activities is included below, not inclusive of CSTE's policy, advocacy, and communications efforts.

Convenings

- **Updated:** Facilitate rapid bidirectional communications between CDC IMS response and CSTE members by sharing information, resources, and guidance documents with several audiences. To date, more than 27 guidance documents related to planning and response operations have been reviewed by CSTE membership and staff.
- Participate in weekly leadership strategy calls with CDC's State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Health Department Support Task Force, ASTHO, NACCHO, and APHL.
  - Hosted daily internal COVID-19 response coordination briefings for the first six months of the response. Currently, these meetings are held twice a week on Mondays and Thursdays.
  - Host weekly COVID-19 All State Epi calls to discuss emerging issues and response-related needs.
  - Host weekly CSTE COVID-19 Core Group calls to provide rapid feedback on CDC data collection tools and guidance documents.
- Host the CSTE/APHL/CDC COVID-19 Thought Leaders calls as a forum to discuss emerging epi/lab issues and inform COVID-19 response strategies for laboratory testing, reporting and data.
- Host monthly COVID-19 Case Investigation and Contact Tracing workgroup calls to discuss challenges and promising practices, including metrics and indicators for measuring impact of CI/CT on disease transmission. Calls transitioned to monthly cadence September 2021.
- Participate in weekly APHL ELR Open Call Series to coordinate on recurring ELR updates, solutions, and process improvements. In conjunction with the CSTE National ELR Workgroup monthly calls and Basecamp, APHL and CSTE leverage these weekly calls to readily address issues and questions regarding ELR for COVID-19.
- Convened and hosted biweekly COVID-19 Data Preparedness workgroup calls from December 2020 – September 2021 to address emerging data preparedness needs for the response. In an effort to further streamline discussions, these issues will now be addressed through other existing S/I or COVID-19 response calls.
- Hosted weekly (until March 2021) and bi-weekly COVID-19 Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) Listening Sessions with CDC's Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion and CSTE's HAI Subcommittee until May 2021, when COVID-19 HAI topics were rolled into the standing monthly HAI Subcommittee call series.
- Hosted biweekly CDC/APHL/CSTE COVID-19 Serology and Immunity Workgroup calls to discuss seroprevalence studies approaches and issues around the interpretation of serology results and the utility for understanding disease burden through February 2021.
- Hosted several ad-hoc topical webinar presentations (average attendance: 160), including:
  - Demonstrations on contact tracing tools, illness monitoring systems, and exposure notification technology for COVID-19
  - COVID-19 Sewage Surveillance
  - COVID-19 Serology and Immunity Updates
  - Implementation of COVID-19 Health Equity Strategy
  - CDC COVID-19 Public Use Dataset
  - Syndromic Surveillance for COVID-19
  - COVID-19 Vaccine Development
  - COVID-19 during Pregnancy
  - COVID-19 Whole Genome Sequencing Data Dashboards and Visualization

- Hosted weekly CSTE Occupational Health (OH) COVID-19 calls with NIOSH and CSTE's Occupational Health Subcommittee members from April through August 2020. Currently, the group convenes on a monthly basis.

#### Partnerships

- Ongoing collaboration with ASTHO, NACCHO, and APHL on mutual COVID-19 response priorities to streamline overall response coordination with CDC incident management and other federal public health agencies.
- Continues to participate in the Disease Investigation Technology Collaborative, a joint effort led by Linux Foundation Public Health and Resolve to Save Lives serving as a community for stakeholders and partners to learn from each other, share best and promising practices, and areas of improvement, and help promote effective and sustainable CI/CT technologies.
- Coordinated with APHL and CDC on electronic laboratory reporting topics, including releasing updated versions of National ELR Flat File and HL7 Generator Tool on the CSTE website.
- Collaborated with the World Economic Forum (WEF) on two projects in the Forum's "Internet of Things" portfolio aimed at improving timeliness, completeness, and accuracy of data for the COVID-19 response.
  - Assess the use of wearable devices for community monitoring of COVID-19 illness.
  - Improvements in reporting from point-of-care laboratory devices being deployed in non-traditional testing sites across the country for COVID-19.
- Established partnerships with APHL, ASTHO, NACCHO, Abbott, Moderna Therapeutics, Pfizer, Pew Research Center, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Apple, and Google.
- Provided designated users at STLT health agencies complimentary access to Experian Health's Universal Identify Manager and Lexis Nexis Accurint to assist in contact tracing and case investigation efforts.

#### Resources

- **Updated:** Following deployment of a national assessment, developed a summary report entitled, "Addressing Gaps in Public Health Reporting of Race and Ethnicity Data for COVID-19: Findings and Recommendations Among 45 State and Local Health Departments." The report includes a set of recommendations to improve the completeness and quality of race and ethnicity data reported for COVID-19. The summary report and recommendations will be widely released in February 2022.
- **Updated:** Developed and disseminated "Interim Guidance for Public Health Surveillance Programs for Classification of COVID-19-associated Deaths among COVID-19 Cases." The guidance was developed in collaboration with CSTE membership and CDC response staff. It is intended to help public health surveillance programs determine if infections counted as COVID-19 cases in persons who have died should also be counted as COVID-19-associated deaths.
- Maintained the CSTE Electronic Laboratory Reporting (ELR) Points of Contact for laboratories and other reporting entities to streamline communications to public health agencies. The ELR Points of Contact were reviewed and updated by jurisdictions in September 2021.
- Disseminated the COVID-19 ELR Capabilities and Needs Assessment in October 2020 to better understand the ELR-related technical assistance needs of public health agencies. Presented the assessment content on the CDC Division of Laboratory Systems Clinical Laboratory COVID-19 Response Call in December 2020.
- In collaboration with the School Support Section of the STLT Support Taskforce at CDC, CSTE developed and disseminated a standardized K-12 school surveillance guidance document for classification of clusters and outbreaks.
- Approved final COVID-19 position statement (21-ID-01) in June 2021 and received CDC concurrence in July 2021.
- Developed and curated the COVID-19 Response Resource Repository and related discussion forums on Basecamp to encourage jurisdictional sharing of information, resources, best practices, and challenges.
- Developed and curated case investigation and contact tracing (CI/CT) workforce development resources in a repository of those resources, tools, and demonstrations for epidemiologists supporting CI/CT.

- Approved two interim position statements to (1) standardize and (2) update the case definition for COVID-19 and added COVID-19 to the list of nationally notifiable conditions.
- Developed an appendix on epidemiological classification of work-relatedness to accompany the COVID-19 position statement.
- In collaboration with CORHA Outbreak Detection and Reporting workgroup, developed setting-specific COVID-19 outbreak definitions and reporting thresholds to support COVID-19 outbreak investigation and reporting in PHAs.
- Developed and disseminated the “Recommended Interim Guidance for Collecting Employment Information about COVID-19 Cases” resource.

#### Workforce

- Support the Applied Epidemiology Fellowship (AEF) with fellows contributing to the COVID-19 response at their host sites.

#### **COVID-19 Supplemental Projects**

CSTE has received over \$35M in supplemental funding to support the following COVID-19-related projects.

#### Data and Systems

- **COVID-19 Animal Surveillance:** In partnership with CDC One Health Office and NASPHV, support health department pilot projects to conduct surveillance and investigation activities for SARS-CoV-2 in animals. Round 1 sites period of performance: October 2020 – December 2021. Round 2 sites period of performance: January 2022 – December 2022 (TBD).
  - o CSTE Staff: Ashley Vineyard
  - o Selected public health agencies:
    - Round 1: Seattle & King County Public Health, Louisiana Department of Health, Arizona Department of Health Services, Minnesota Department of Health, and Harris County Public Health
    - Round 2: TBD; existing sites may continue
- **COVID-19 Forecasting/Modeling:** Support development of COVID-19 forecasts and intervention-focused mathematical models to public health response decision making for intervention and mitigation strategies. Round 1 sites period of performance: November 2020 – January 2022. Round 2 sites period of performance: February 2022 – February 2023 (TBD).
  - o CSTE Staff: Amelia Blumberg
  - o Selected sites:
    - Round 1: Columbia University Medical Center, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, North Carolina State University, Northeastern University, and Stanford University School of Medicine
    - Round 2: TBD; existing sites may continue
- **Unexplained Respiratory Death Surveillance:** Support 6 health departments to collaborate with medical examiners and coroner partners to develop and implement protocols for surveillance of unexplained respiratory deaths that occur outside the healthcare setting. Initial project period of performance: December 2020 – December 2021; project will continue for a second year if previous sites are interested.
  - o CSTE Staff: Amelia Blumberg
  - o Selected sites: Cobb and Douglas Public Health, Dallas County Health and Human Services, Minnesota Department of Health, New Jersey Department of Health, New York City Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, and Western Michigan University Office of the Medical Examiner
- **COVID-NET:** Increase support for existing Influenza Hospitalization Surveillance Project (IHSP) sites to conduct specific COVID-19 surveillance activities and participation in COVID-NET. This project will continue during the 2021-2022 season.
  - o CSTE Staff: Mimi Huynh
  - o Current IHSP sites: Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, Utah

**Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)**

- **Updated: COVID-19 and Reproductive Health :**

- In partnership with CDC Division of Reproductive Health, support 14 jurisdictions to assess impact of COVID-19 vaccine on pregnant and recently postpartum women via implementation of Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) supplement.
- Convene a multidisciplinary workgroup to develop recommendations to improve pregnancy status reporting for COVID-19 cases with participation from various subject matter experts, members, and partners representing maternal child health, infectious disease, surveillance and informatics, public and private lab partners, and clinical provider associations.
  - o CSTE Staff: Megan Toe, Mia Israel

Workforce and Capacity Building

- **Applied Epidemiology Fellowship (AEF):** 11 second year AEF fellows are placed in a COVID-19 subject area with most other AEF fellows supporting the response in some capacity.
  - o CSTE Staff: Amanda Masters, Jessica Haupt, Lamesha Dorham
- **Updated: Epidemiology Capacity Assessment (ECA):** Identify epidemiology capacity/gaps during a public health emergency via ECA. The ECA report was released in December 2021.
  - o CSTE Staff: Sara Auer, Jessica Arrazola
- **Emergency Response Capacity:** Increase emergency response capacity by continuing to provide forums for members to share best practices and lessons learned during the COVID-19 response.
  - o CSTE Staff: Jordan Peart, Andrew Adams, Kyra Parks
- **Case Investigation/Contact Tracing:** Host the CSTE COVID-19 Case Investigation and Contact Tracing Workgroup to facilitate discussions on case investigation and contact tracing evaluation and review existing metrics and indicators. The workgroup transitioned to monthly meetings, starting in September 2021.
  - o CSTE Staff: Andrew Adams