

May 16, 2022

Dear School Nurse Colleagues,

The Department of Health wants to provide further information on the reporting requirements for COVID-19 which were previewed in April.

Reporting requirements are established by the legislature, but also help the Health Department understand the epidemiology of COVID-19. Reporting will inform our guidance on COVID-19 in schools and communities. The state's reportable communicable disease rule mandates that nurses, school health officials, and other professionals report when an individual is sick with any of several infectious diseases, including COVID-19.

School nurse reporting of COVID cases is expected beginning Monday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022, though nurses who would like to report now can use any of the methods described below at any time.

The rule also requires schools to report patterns of cases that suggest unexpected disease outbreaks of particular concern. **You may report clusters of cases or potential outbreaks that you would like the Health Department to be aware of**, using the methods described below.

**We do not want you to do any contact tracing or case investigation while ongoing, regular COVID-19 transmission is occurring in schools and communities.** Contact tracing and investigation may be a useful tool for you in the future, but we have learned that it is not a good use of your time when COVID-19 is widespread in our communities.

### Case Reporting:

#### Tests to Be Reported:

- Positive diagnostic COVID-19 tests (antigen, LAMP or PCR) reported by parent/caregiver;
- Tests administered by your school.

You do **not** need to report individuals with COVID-like symptoms without a positive diagnostic test.

#### How to report cases:

- Online report (preferred): <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6799382/COVID-Case-Report>
- Email: your local district office or [AHS.VDHEPICOVID19Program@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.VDHEPICOVID19Program@vermont.gov)
- Call: Your local health office (preferred) or, if you need to reach someone outside of business hours, 802-863-7240.
- Information that you are expected to report is detailed at the bottom of this document.



### Reporting Clusters or Suspected Outbreaks:

Most multi-case situations of COVID-19 occurring now do **not** need to be reported to the Health Department. **Do not perform contact tracing or case investigation during the remainder of this school year.** If you do not know whether a cluster of cases are connected or not, you do not currently need to report it as a suspected outbreak.

Clusters or suspected outbreaks that you may report:

- At least three cases that you specifically know, without the need of any investigation, to be in-school close contacts, such as members of the same class or school-activity group.
  - You should not investigate or do contact tracing with any case reports brought to you. The Health Department will initiate an investigation if it is deemed necessary.

Examples of clusters/suspected outbreaks that do **not** need to be reported:

- A group of three or more cases who you suspect to be close contacts in another, non-school setting (e.g., members of the same household or students who attended the same out-of-school gathering).
- A group of three or more cases which you do not already specifically know to be connected (for example., you are not aware of any shared classrooms or other in-school activities).

You may always reach out to us if you are concerned about a group of cases in your school.

### How to report clusters/suspected outbreaks:

- Online report (preferred): <https://apps.health.vermont.gov/SMARTPublic/>
- Email: your local district office or [AHS.VDHEPICOVID19Program@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.VDHEPICOVID19Program@vermont.gov)
- Call: Your local health office (preferred) or, if you need to reach someone outside of business hours, 802-863-7240.



### Appendix: Case Reporting Rule and Guidance

If you do not have immediate access to all the information (for example, provider contact information), please prioritize reporting in a timely fashion rather than interrupting your work to track down the information. Demographic and geographic information are important for the epidemiology of COVID-19; please include these whenever they are available to you.

Vermont's reportable communicable disease rule can be found at:

[https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/hs\\_id\\_reportable\\_communicable\\_diseases\\_rule.pdf](https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/hs_id_reportable_communicable_diseases_rule.pdf)

The rule specifies that case reports “shall include the following information as it relates to the affected person”:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Address
- Telephone number
- Name of health care provider/physician
- Address of health care provider/physician
- Name of disease being reported
- Date of onset of the disease

