Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
Outbreak Reporting Guidance for County Health Departments for COVID-19
Version 5 | June 1, 2021

Florida HEALTH

Outbreak Definitions

Outbreak Definition

- Long-term care facility (LTCF), skilled nursing facility or assisted living facility outbreaks:
  - One or more facility-acquired laboratory-confirmed* COVID-19 case(s) in a resident.
  - Two or more COVID-19 cases† in staff with onset dates or specimen collection dates within a 14-day period who are epidemiologically linked,‡ do not share a household and are not listed as a close contact§ of each other outside of the workplace during standard case investigation or contact tracing.
- Correctional facility/juvenile detention center, adult or child day care, hospital, primary or secondary school, post-secondary school, shelter, workplace or other setting type outbreaks:
  - Two or more COVID-19 cases† among individuals with onset dates or specimen collection dates within a 14-day period who are epidemiologically linked‡ and were not identified as close contacts§ of each other in another setting during standard case investigation or contact tracing.

Outbreak-Associated Cases

Confirmed and probable secondary cases among individuals in the setting should be classified as outbreak-associated. Individual cases outside of the setting that resulted in secondary transmission** from an outbreak-associated case (e.g., family member) should not be included in the outbreak case count.

Outbreak Resolution

No new confirmed or probable COVID-19 cases† identified after two incubation periods (28 days) have passed since the last known setting exposure from a case, or if that cannot be determined, the last case's onset date or specimen collection date (whichever is later).

*Laboratory confirmation: detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA in a clinical specimen using a PCR or antigen test.

†COVID-19 case: meets the confirmed or probable case definition for COVID-19.

‡Epidemiological linkage: cases were present in the setting during the same time period (e.g., same classroom, school event, work shift or department) within 14 days prior to the event date (onset date or specimen collection date, if asymptomatic) and where there is no other more likely source of exposure for identified cases (e.g., same household).

§Close contact: being within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting 2 days before illness onset or specimen collection date (if asymptomatic) and during infectious period.
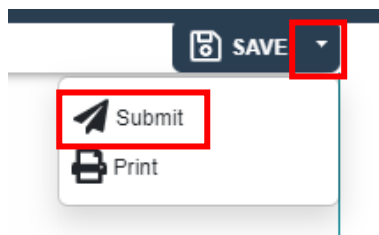
**Secondary transmission: close contact of a COVID-19 case identified during an outbreak investigation that becomes a confirmed or probable case due to outbreak setting exposure.

Entering Outbreaks in Merlin

- **Create an outbreak in Merlin's outbreak module within the same day of notification of an outbreak that meets the above definitions.**
  - If you have already entered an outbreak for a setting previously, you should only create a new outbreak for facilities when it has been greater than two incubation

> periods (28 days) between the last case's onset date or specimen collection date (whichever is later) at that setting and the new case's onset date from the same setting.
>
> o Outbreaks related to school settings should be named based on exposure setting type (e.g., classroom, school event, sports team, etc.).
> o Outbreaks should be created using the 48001-disease code (Influenza and acute respiratory illness) if no testing has yet been performed for any individuals in the outbreak. If a COVID-19 etiology is identified, the outbreak can be flipped to the 00342-disease code (coronavirus disease 2019) at that time.

- **Link any confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases to the outbreak you create.**
  - o Cases should be associated with an outbreak location/facility where they became a case (not where they were transferred if transferred to an isolation facility, such a COVID-19 LTCF).
  - o Only confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases should be linked to the outbreak.
  - o Adding cases will prompt COVID-19 laboratory results to auto-attach to the outbreak.
  - o Close contacts associated with exposures at an outbreak location/facility should <u>not</u> be linked to the outbreak unless the contact becomes a COVID-19 case[†] as a result of secondary transmission.**
  - o Cases should be associated with outbreaks based upon the first positive laboratory results. **Cases that are possible reinfections can be included in the "Notes" section but not attached to the outbreak.**
    - For case classification of reinfections, contact your regional epidemiologist.
- **Complete the following essential fields upon outbreak creation:**
  - o Background section:
    - Outbreak name
    - Department of Health (DOH) notified date
    - Syndrome
      - Select "respiratory illness"
    - Disease
      - Select "coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-2019) – 00342"
    - Outbreak
    - Investigated
  - o Geographic location section:
    - County
    - Other counties affected: include counties that have outbreak-associated COVID-19 cases linked to the outbreak; this will allow those county health departments to view the outbreak on the active outbreaks list for outbreak IDs.
  - o Setting information section:
    - Setting type
    - Setting name
    - Setting address
    - Number potentially exposed
  - o Transmission:

- Primary mode of transmission
  - Select "direct – person to person or droplet"
- Results section:
  - Total cases and total type
  - Total non-staff cases
  - Total staff cases
  - Total unknown cases
    - Leave blank or enter "0" if you record staff and non-staff case counts
  - Number hospitalized and total type
  - Number died and total type
- COVID-19 survey section (required fields):
  - Question 1 (Number of cases with reported pneumonia) and total type
  - Question 2 (Were viral agents identified outside of the Bureau of Public Health Laboratories?) and table (if applicable)
  - Question 3 (Outbreak related to extracurricular school activity?) and drop-down with text box (if applicable)
  - Question 4 (Was secondary transmission identified in outbreak?)
  - Question 5 (Was on-site assessment performed by DOH in LTCF setting?) and Agency for Health Care Administration notification date
  - Question 6 (Was isolation and quarantine recommended for cases and close contacts?)
  - Question 7 (Staff and non-staff received COVID-19 vaccine?)
  - Question 8 (COVID-19 vaccination information, if applicable)
  - Question 9 (Influenza vaccinations offered to staff and non-staff in this setting?)
  - Question 10 (Influenza vaccination status known for staff and non-staff?)
  - Question 11 (Influenza vaccination information)
- Clinical results section:
  - Symptoms
- Laboratory results section:
  - Laboratory-confirmed human specimens
- Conclusions/lessons learned section:
  - Recommendations/specific control measures provided to site/facility
  - Method of providing recommendations (select all that apply)
  - Recommendations implemented
- **Update the outbreak case count and notes section as new information is received until the outbreak has ended.**
- **Close the outbreak when the investigation has ended by entering the date the investigation ended (background section).**
- **Once closed, submit the outbreak by clicking the down arrow next to the save button and clicking submit.**

Outbreak and COVID-19 Isolation Centers

- **Close outbreaks that are COVID-19 isolation centers.**
- **Do not create new outbreaks for isolation centers while they remain isolation facilities.**
- **Questions on specific outbreak investigations should be directed to your regional epidemiologist. For system issues or other questions, please email Merlin Helpdesk at Merlin.Helpdesk@flhealth.gov.**