



**Coronavirus Update #275
July 14, 2021**

DATE: July 14, 2021

TO: Chief Executive Officers
Regional Presidents
Head of Assisted Living
Heads of Home Health
Heads of Long Term Care
Head of PACE
Head of Pediatric Day Care
Chief Operating Officers
Chief Medical Officers
Chief Nursing Officers
Directors of Infection Control/Infection Control Practitioners
Emergency Preparedness Contacts
Heads of Human Resources
Legal Counsel
Heads of Public Relations

FROM: Cathleen Bennett, President and CEO

RE: **Coronavirus Update No. 275**

Today's Numbers: The total number of COVID-19 cases in New Jersey now stands at 896,191 after 371 more individuals were confirmed to have the virus in the last 24 hours. There is now a reported total of 23,811 COVID-19 fatalities, four more than yesterday. As of 10 p.m. yesterday, 310 residents are hospitalized, with 50 requiring intensive care and 22 on ventilators. The rate of transmission is 1.08. To date a total of 5,125,845 individuals are fully vaccinated in the state.

Delta Rises: The Delta variant is now the predominant strain of the COVID-19 virus among new cases in New Jersey, according to the latest [COVID-19 Variant Surveillance Report](#) from NJDOH. The highly contagious strain represented 70 percent of New Jersey cases in the week ending June 26, state officials said. It has passed the Alpha variant, previously called the UK variant, which previously had been the most common variant in the state.

Lab Testing of Breakthrough Infections: NJDOH is encouraging healthcare providers to send SARS-CoV-2 positive respiratory specimens to the N.J. Public Health and Environmental Laboratories (PHEL) when vaccine failure is suspected. The state lab will perform genomic sequencing to better understand breakthrough cases and identify unusual patterns associated with variant strains.

NJDOH is requesting that post-acute care and long-term care facilities submit to PHEL, or ask commercial laboratories to submit, all SARS-CoV-2 positive respiratory specimens in residents where vaccine failure and/or reinfection is suspected. Additional NJDOH information on specimens from LTC facilities is attached.

FDA Testing Updates: As of yesterday, 396 tests and sample collection devices are authorized by the FDA under emergency use authorizations (EUAs). These include 282 molecular tests and sample collection devices, 85 antibody and other immune response tests and 29 antigen tests. There are 52 molecular authorizations and one antibody authorization that can be used with home-collected samples. There is one molecular prescription at-home test, three antigen prescription at-home tests, five antigen over-the-counter (OTC) at-home tests and two molecular OTC at-home tests.

The FDA has authorized 11 antigen tests and seven molecular tests for serial screening programs. The FDA has also authorized 572 revisions to EUA authorizations.

Vaccine Fact Sheets Add Guillain-Barré Risk: The FDA yesterday moved to inform recipients of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine about an observed increased risk of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) following vaccination. The fact sheets for [healthcare providers](#) and vaccine [recipient and caregivers](#) have been updated to reflect this risk. Based on an analysis of Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting (VAERS) data, there have been 100 preliminary reports of GBS following vaccination with the J&J/Janssen vaccine after approximately 12.5 million doses administered. Of these reports, 95 of them were serious and required hospitalization. There was one reported death.

Each year in the United States, an estimated 3,000 to 6,000 people develop GBS. Although the available evidence suggests an association between the J&J/Janssen vaccine and increased risk of GBS, it is insufficient to establish a causal relationship, according to the FDA. No similar signal has been identified with the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines. The FDA noted that it continues to find that the known and potential benefits of the J&J/Janssen vaccine clearly outweigh the known and potential risks.

Vaccination Mandates: [Virtua Health announced](#) this week that it will require all 14,000-plus members of its workforce to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by Sept. 15. Virtua leaders said the decision is based on CDC recommendations and the overwhelming scientific consensus that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective in saving lives and ending the pandemic. Virtua will consider employee requests for reasonable accommodation based on religious beliefs or disability/medical condition on an individual basis.

“As care providers, we have an obligation to ‘do no harm,’” said President and CEO Dennis W. Pullin. “Having our colleagues protected against this terrible virus helps ensure we keep that promise.”

FDA Publishes *From Our Perspective*: The FDA Center for Drug Evaluation and Research has published a [From Our Perspective](#) on the FDA’s Clinical Methodologies Group’s recent U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) award, which will fund expansion of the [CURE ID platform](#)[External Link Disclaimer](#). The platform will allow automated anonymized data collection from electronic health records and clinical disease registries for COVID-19 and other difficult-to-treat infectious diseases. This work may facilitate the clinical, research, and regulatory

communities to identify signals of potentially safe and effective COVID-19 therapies that may also be candidates for additional study in randomized clinical trials. In the future, CURE ID's expansion will also include a platform for patients with long COVID to upload information on their treatments, in addition to the treatment outcomes they consider most important.

FDA Consumer Protection Efforts: As part of the FDA's effort to protect consumers, the agency issued a warning letter to one network operating two websites, www.premierdream.com and www.eirmed360.com, for marketing unapproved drugs for multiple diseases, including COVID-19. Drugs that have circumvented regulatory safeguards may be contaminated, counterfeit, contain varying amounts of active ingredients or contain different ingredients altogether. Consumers can visit [BeSafeRx](https://www.fda.gov/oc/be-saferx) to learn about how to safely buy medicine online.

Ventilation Systems' Effectiveness: A [recent CDC study](#) showed that high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) cleaners can have significant impact in reducing the airborne infectious particles in nonclinical settings, making them a useful tool in reducing COVID-19 exposure. In the study, researchers simulated a scenario in which an infected meeting participant who was exhaling aerosols was placed in a room with two simulated uninfected participants and a simulated uninfected speaker. Using two HEPA air cleaners close to the aerosol source reduced the aerosol exposure of the uninfected participants and speaker by up to 65 percent. A combination of HEPA air cleaners and universal masking reduced exposure by up to 90 percent.

Attitudes on Vaccinating Adolescents: [New survey data](#) sheds light on attitudes toward vaccinating adolescents against COVID-19 as the FDA granted EUA approval of the Pfizer vaccine to adolescents ages 12-15 in May. The Healthcare and Public Perceptions of Immunizations (HaPPI) Survey Collaborative surveyed roughly 2,000 adolescents and parents/guardians in April, prior to the FDA's expanded authorization. The survey showed that 52 percent of unvaccinated adolescents ages 13-17 and 56 percent of parents reported intentions to be vaccinated. However, vaccine receipt reported by parents of adolescents differed across demographic groups; parents identifying as female or Hispanic, or who had an education lower than a bachelor's degree, reported the lowest adolescent COVID-19 vaccination receipt.

Obtaining more information about adolescent COVID-19 vaccine safety and efficacy, as well as school COVID-19 vaccination requirements, were the most commonly reported factors that would increase vaccination intentions among both parents and adolescents. Federal, state, and local health officials and primary care professionals were the most trusted sources of COVID-19 vaccine information among both groups. The results were reported in the CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, with the researchers calling for communications to adolescents and parents on the benefits and safety of COVID-19 vaccination for adolescents. Such messages, particularly from healthcare professionals, could help increase confidence in adolescent COVID-19 vaccination.

N.J. COVID Activity: Following is the latest COVID data from New Jersey counties and regions:

COVID-19 Status by Region				
Region	County	%Positivity (7-Day Avg)	Cases/100K (7-Day Avg)	Tests/100K (7-Day Avg)
Northeast	Bergen	1	2	248
Northeast	Essex	2	1	279
Northeast	Hudson	1	2	245
Northeast	Middlesex	1	3	230
Northeast	Morris	1	5	202
Northeast	Passaic	2	3	190
Northeast	Union	1	3	252
Northwest	Hunterdon	5	2	227
Northwest	Mercer	1	2	290
Northwest	Somerset	2	2	218
Northwest	Sussex	1	3	152
Northwest	Warren	1	1	168
Southeast	Atlantic	2	9	129
Southeast	Cape May	0	2	108
Southeast	Monmouth	4	8	216
Southeast	Ocean	3	6	179
Southwest	Burlington	1	1	166
Southwest	Camden	2	7	173
Southwest	Cumberland	2	1	329
Southwest	Gloucester	1	3	120
Southwest	Salem	1	3	86

Source: New Jersey Department of Health

NJHA Resources and Support: As a reminder, NJHA’s Emergency Preparedness team is available 24/7 to assist providers at 800-457-2262 or epalert@njha.com. In addition, the state’s hotline number is 800-962-1253. Official guidance and other resources are available online from:

- CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- NJDOH <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>
- NJHA <http://www.njha.com/coronavirus>