



TEXAS

Health and Human Services



Texas Department of State
Health Services

Welcome to Texas NEDSS COVID-19 Case Investigation Training

Dr. Diana Martinez, PhD, MPH
Deputy State Epidemiologist,
Office of the State Epidemiologist
September 2021

Overview



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- I. Introduction/Welcoming
- II. Office of the State Epidemiologist
- III. Transition to NEDSS
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COVID-19 Case Investigations
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Office of the State Epidemiologist



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Established: December 1, 2020

- **At DSHS:**

- Serves as subject matter expert on epidemiologic matters and communicable/noncommunicable diseases for the department
- Integrates epidemiologic and medical data to inform development of public health policy for Texas
- Provides leadership and coordination for data analysis and presentation, especially through the Center for Health Statistics

- **At state level:**

- Provides epidemiology and disease control consultation to state facilities, health service regions, local health agencies, and other entities

- **At national level:**

- Serves as primary point of contact to the CDC and other federal agencies for epidemiologic science and surveillance issues
- Serves as representative for Texas in national public health professional societies, such as CSTE, and at national public health meetings

Senate Bill 968

Section 15

- Passed the Senate on April 21, 2021
 - 31 Yeas, 0 Nays,
- Passed the House, with amendments, on May 26, 2021
 - 146 Yeas, 2 Nays, 1 present not voting

1 Code, is amended by adding Section 1001.0515 to read as follows:

2 Sec. 1001.0515. OFFICE OF CHIEF STATE EPIDEMIOLOGIST. (a)

3 The commissioner shall:

4 (1) establish an Office of Chief State Epidemiologist
5 within the department to provide expertise in public health
6 activities and policy in this state by:

7 (A) evaluating epidemiologic, medical, and
8 health care information; and

9 (B) identifying pertinent research and
10 evidence-based best practices; and

11 (2) appoint a physician licensed to practice medicine
12 in this state as the chief state epidemiologist to administer the
13 Office of Chief State Epidemiologist.

14 (b) The chief state epidemiologist must:

15 (1) be board certified in a medical specialty; and

16 (2) have significant experience in public health and
17 an advanced degree in public health, epidemiology, or a related
18 field.

19 (c) The chief state epidemiologist serves as:

20 (1) the department expert on epidemiological matters
21 and on communicable and noncommunicable diseases; and

22 (2) the department's senior science representative and
23 primary contact for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
24 and other federal agencies related to epidemiologic science and
25 disease surveillance.

26 (d) The chief state epidemiologist may provide professional

Office of Chief State Epidemiologist

Dr. Jennifer Shuford
Chief State
Epidemiologist

CEFO

Dora Fogle
Program Specialist

Brad Cook
Executive Assistant

Carrie Bradford
Data Governance
Director

VACANT
Management
Analyst

Diana Martinez
Deputy State
Epidemiologist

VACANT
Research
Specialist

VACANT
Medical Research
Specialist

Saroj Rai
Senior Scientific
Advisor

VACANT
Program Specialist

Center for Health
Statistics
Lisa Wyman
Director

Chris Aker
Director

Romey Armstrong Staff
Services Officer

VACANT
Program Specialist

Tina Gaitan
Admin Asst

Willi Elam-Sneed
Admin Asst

VACANT
Director | Health
Information
Resources Branch

Ann Barnett
Director Health
Providers
Resources Branch

Bruce Burns Director
Texas Health Care
Information Collection

Matt Turner Director
Agency Analytics Unit



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9/13/2021



Transition to NEDSS

- Effective September 1, prioritization of COVID-19 investigations
- Beginning November 1, resume use of the Texas National Notifiable Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NEDSS) as the primary disease surveillance system for conducting and reporting COVID-19 case investigations
 - Adherence to CDC/CSTE case definition and epi case criteria guidance
 - Validating laboratory reports
 - Use of non-electronic laboratory reports (ELRs) to begin case investigations

New Case Investigation Prioritization Guidance



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Prioritization 1

- Reported COVID-19 associated **outbreak(s)** in a **vulnerable population** or a facility that houses individuals that are at high risk for severe illness (e.g., nursing homes, assisted-living facilities, elderly/adult daycares, etc.) and correctional facilities
- **Confirmed and probable hospitalization** cases



New Case Investigation Prioritization Guidance



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Prioritization 2

- Reported COVID-19-associated **outbreak(s)** in a **non-vulnerable population or facility** that does not house high risk individuals (e.g. schools, child daycares, camps, production plants, mass gatherings, etc.)



New Case Investigation Prioritization Guidance

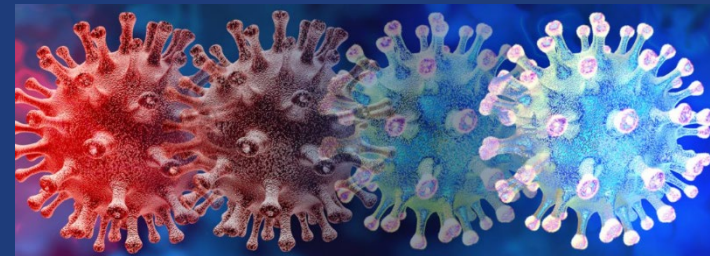


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Prioritization 3

- COVID-19 **vaccine breakthrough** cases (*hospitalization and deaths only*)
- Sequence confirmed emerging COVID-19 **variants of concern** cases
- COVID-19 **reinfections**



New Case Investigation Prioritization Guidance



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Prioritization 4

- Confirmed and Probable COVID-19 cases in neighborhoods/zip codes with lower vaccination rates
- COVID-19-associated fatalities

New Case Investigation Prioritization Guidance



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Prioritization 5

- Confirmed and Probable COVID-19 cases that do not meet any of the above categories

New Case Investigation Prioritization Guidance



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Priority 1- Outbreaks in vulnerable populations/facilities and hospitalized cases

Priority 2- Outbreaks in non-vulnerable pops/facilities

Priority 3- Vaccine breakthrough, Variants of concern, and Reinfection

Priority 4- Cases in Neighborhoods/Zip codes w low vaccination rates and Fatalities

Priority 5- All remaining confirmed and probable cases

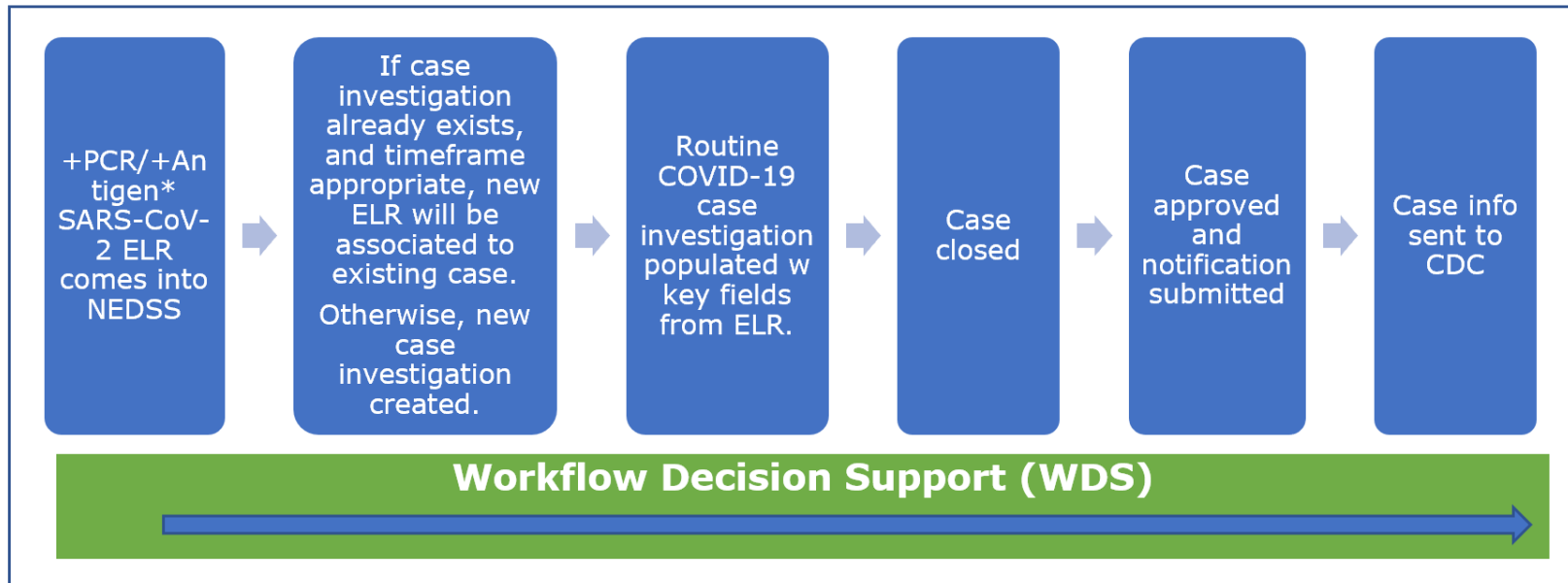
Workflow Decision Support (coming Nov 1)



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COVID-19 Electronic Lab Report (ELR) to Routine Case Investigation Automation Process Overview



*CSTE new probable case definition being developed for implementation by November 1, 2021.

Contact Info



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For questions on

- COVID-19 case investigations or other epidemiology and surveillance related questions

EAIDU-

Coronavirus@dshs.texas.gov

- NEDSS

NEDSS@dshs.texas.gov



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Thank you!
