



Delaware Sentinel Surveillance Program

The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) employs different types of public health surveillance systems to describe the health of Delawareans. Sentinel surveillance is a type of public health surveillance that collects data from a smaller selected group of healthcare providers, known as sentinel providers. Data collected and reported by sentinel providers are used to identify and quantify health events that may occur among high risk populations and provide situational awareness regarding a health event in the larger population or geographic area.

Delaware's COVID-19 sentinel surveillance serves as a tool to describe and monitor the spread of the virus in vulnerable populations across the state with an emphasis on mitigating the spread of the virus through identification of persons with mild or asymptomatic infection. As such sentinel surveillance of COVID-19 is an integral component of Delaware's Reopening Plan. The COVID-19 sentinel provider network consists primarily of Federally Qualified Health Centers and other health care providers serving vulnerable populations, as well as Long Term Care facilities.

ILINet Sentinel Provider

Delaware's COVID-19 sentinel surveillance builds on the existing outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network, or ILINet. ILINet is a program conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state health departments to collect influenza surveillance data from volunteer sentinel healthcare providers. Practices eligible for ILINet providers are: Emergency Medicine, Family Practice, OB/GYN, Infectious Disease, Pediatrics, and Urgent Care. Providers who participate in the ILINet program collect and report information about the level of influenza-like illness (ILI) currently seen in their practice. Data reported by ILINet providers, in combination with other influenza surveillance data, provide a national picture of influenza virus and ILI activity in the U.S. There are more than 2,900 ILINet sentinel providers in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Just as influenza is a reportable disease in Delaware, the Division of Public Health (DPH) requires that all testing for COVID-19 is immediately reported to the Division (via fax to 302-223-1540, email to reportdisease@delaware.gov, or 24-hour Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology phone line at 1-888-295-5156).

LTC Surveillance

Rapid and widespread transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 is of significant concern within nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, rest residential facilities, and intermediate care facilities for persons with intellectual disabilities. Because asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic residents and staff might play an important role in transmission in such facilities, additional prevention measures merit consideration. The ability to test large numbers of residents and staff may expedite cohorting of residents



and staff in locations designated for the care of those with infection -- either in different locations within individual facilities or in separate facilities. Voluntary testing of all facilities within the State of Delaware began on May 5, 2020. Because of its importance for surveillance and infection control, mandatory universal testing of all facilities within the State of Delaware will take effect beginning 6/1/2020.

Sentinel Testing Guidance

Vulnerable Populations	Frequency	Notes
Symptomatic Cases	Per clinical evaluation	5 cases each week
Asymptomatic Cases	Random samples	10 cases each week
Post-Acute Care Facilities (non-outbreak conditions) *		
Asymptomatic Residents	Once every 4 weeks	Testing on a rotating basis (e.g., 25% of residents each week)
Asymptomatic Staff	Once every week	Testing on a rotating basis (e.g., 20% of staff daily)

* *Long-term Care Facility Staff testing is mandatory as of June 1, 2020.*

Delaware Public Health Laboratory will support sentinel testing as capacity allows.