

3/5/2021 | NCDHHS COVID-19 Response Updates

Dear Community Partners,

As of March 3rd, COVID-19 vaccinations are open to Groups 1 – 3 (all [frontline essential workers](#)) in North Carolina. The state expects to move to Group 4 beginning on March 24, first prioritizing those with high-risk medical conditions.

- Not sure what group you're in? [Click here](#) and make sure you get text updates from NCDHHS!
- [Click here](#) to register to volunteer to support vaccine distribution
- [Click here](#) to help share information about vaccines using our easy social media toolkit.
- Help spread the word about group 3 eligibility and post this text and use the attached image to your social media – right now!
 - *All frontline essential workers are now eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine, including first responders and emergency personnel such as police and fire fighters, people who work in manufacturing, food and agriculture, grocery stores, government workers, and clergy, among others. Remember, that some vaccine providers may not be ready to open to all frontline essential workers -- you may have to wait to make an appointment, but you have a spot to take your shot. Find out more: <https://bit.ly/3sK4uw> #YourSpotYourShot*

Yesterday, the State Board of Education approved of a resolution endorsing NCDHHS updated guidance that [instructs schools to offer in-person instruction](#). Recognizing the growing harms to children who are out of school and relying solely on remote instruction – including negative impacts on academics, mental health and food insecurity – the department's updated guidance instructs schools to offer in-person learning to the fullest extent possible while following all public health protocols. Schools should only use remote learning options for higher-risk students and for families opting for remote learning for their children.

This week NCDHHS also launched statewide access to [K-12 COVID-19 rapid testing in public schools](#), following a months-long successful pilot in over 220 schools across the state.

See below for the latest COVID-19 statewide updates for K-12 and the entire state. And please continue to make use of the COVID-19 [Prevent and Protect Media Toolkit](#) – full of social media posts and images, infographics, customizable flyers, and more – to get the word out about important tools and resources designed to help North Carolinians protect themselves and their loved ones against the spread of COVID-19. We will continue to update the page with new materials, so please check back often. **All materials are available in English and Spanish!**

With gratitude,
Rebecca

NCDHHS K-12 COVID Response Updates

The following public health guidance documents have been updated as of March 4, 2021:

- [StrongSchoolsNC: Public Health Toolkit - K-12](#)
- [K-12 COVID-19 Antigen Testing Interim Guidance](#)
- [Requirements and Recommendations for Recess, Specials, and General Activities](#)
- [Reference Guide for Suspected, Presumptive, or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 \(K-12\)](#)
- [StrongSchoolsNC Infection Control and PPE Guidance \(K-12\)](#)

Please direct questions about state K-12 public health guidance to
StrongSchoolsNC@dhhs.nc.gov.

March 5th Statewide COVID-19 Response Updates and Resources

PRESS RELEASES since the last update include:

- [North Carolina Top in the Nation for Vaccinating People 65 and Older](#)
- [NC to Receive Authorized Johnson & Johnson's One-Shot COVID-19 Vaccine Wednesday](#)
- [NCDHHS Begins Mailing Enrollment Packets and Launches Call Center in Preparation for NC Medicaid Managed Care Open Enrollment](#)
- [Gov. Cooper Announces Frontline Essential Workers Eligible for Vaccination Beginning March 3](#)
- [NCDHHS Updates Guidance for K-12 Schools, Instructs Schools to Open for In-person Instruction](#)
- [COVID-19 Cases Declining Rapidly in North Carolina Long-Term Care Settings](#)
- [NCDHHS Expands Access to COVID-19 Rapid Testing in K-12 Schools](#)
- [NCDHHS Updates County Alert System, Shows Continued Progress in NC](#)

NEW resources since the last update include:

- *Updated* [Vaccine FAQs](#)
- *Updated* [Deeper Dive Group 4](#)
- **NEW** [Vaccine flyer for Frontline Workers](#)

UPDATED guidance since the last update includes:

- *Updated* [Guidance for Retail Businesses](#)
- **NEW** [NCDHHS Pulse Oximeter Use Guidance](#)
- The [Secretarial Directive](#) has been rescinded effective Feb. 26.
- *Updated* [vaccinations guidance for Individuals](#)
- **NEW** [Vaccine Operational Guidance for Homeless Provider Staff](#)
- *Updated* [Vaccinations Guidance for Child Care](#)
- *Updated* [Vaccine Operational Guidance for Schools](#)
- *Updated* [StrongSchoolsNC: Public Health Toolkit - K-12](#)
- **NEW** [Secretarial Order 8](#)

UPDATED reports since the last update include:

- [County Alert System](#)
- [Vaccinations Dashboard](#)
- [COVID-19 Clusters in North Carolina Report](#)
- [Outbreaks and Clusters Reports](#)
- [Patients Presumed to be Recovered Report](#)
- [Risk Factors for Severe Illness Report](#)
- [CLI Surveillance Report](#)

NEW EVENTS ADDED to the [community testing events page](#)

UPDATED Contact Tracing [numbers](#)

Rebecca Planchard, MPP

Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Secretary

[North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services](#)

Help protect your family and neighbors from COVID-19

[Know the 3 Ws. Wear. Wait. Wash.](#)

#StayStrongNC and get the latest at nc.gov/covid19.

rebecca.planchard@dhhs.nc.gov

Office: 919-527-7527 | Mobile: 919-818-2298

101 Blair Drive, Adams Building

2001 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699-2000