Responding to and Recovering from a Global Pandemic

• Moving Forward Together in North Carolina’s Pandemic Response
• Recovering Stronger
Next phase: Focus on recovery while staying prepared for future variants

**Core Principles**

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<tr>
<th>Empowering individuals</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prioritizing Equity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintaining Health System Capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborating with Local Partners</td>
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**Operational Preparedness**

*Health System Capacity*
- Working with GA on changes needed for regulation flexibilities after SOE sunset

*Vaccines Everywhere*
- “Vial in Every Fridge” Provider Campaign

*Funding Testing Programs*
- Building supply to meet future surge needs

*Accessible Treatment*
- Promoting access and awareness of how to access COVID treatment

*Managing Outbreaks*
- Working with partners and directly supporting outbreak response in high priority settings

*Refocusing Contact Tracing*
- Shifting focus to high priority settings
Updated metrics will allow us to most effectively guide response

Starting 3/23 the following metrics will be displayed on the summary page of the public dashboard

**Early Warning Indicators**

- **Wastewater Surveillance** data serves as an early warning indicator since the virus can appear in wastewater 4-6 days prior to case identification
- **COVID like Illness (CLI)** in the ER can give an early indication of rising COVID levels and early insight to impact on health systems

**Trends in Indicators of Current Status**

- **Hospital admissions** show us how COVID-19 is impacting health systems
- The trend in overall **COVID-19 cases** can help us understand the spread of disease in specific communities or groups overtime
Updated metrics will allow us to most effectively guide response

Starting 3/23 the following metrics will be displayed on the summary page of the public dashboard

**Vaccination Coverage**
- Staying up to date with the COVID-19 vaccine is still the best protection from severe illness
- Monitoring vaccine data gives insight to the level of immunity in the state

**Surveillance of Variants**
- Graph that shows changes in variants and when a new variant is detected
- Early detection of new variants helps the state inform response

**Current Status of CDC COVID-19 Community Level**
- Weekly map categorizing counties as low, medium, or high
- This map will help people understand COVID levels in their community and inform their actions
Recover Stronger

North Carolina’s success has been driven by grounding ourselves in:

- Strong Collaborative Partnerships.
- Robust Data Infrastructure and Accountability.
- Transparent Communications Focused on Earning Public Trust.
- Adapting to Evolving Science and Research.

The pandemic exacerbated existing challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioral Health</th>
<th>Children and Families</th>
<th>Workforce</th>
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<td>• Nearly 1 in 5 North Carolinians have a mental illness.</td>
<td>• Number of children experiencing food insecurity rose from 1 in 5 pre-pandemic to as high as 1 in 3 children in rural NC</td>
<td>• NC early childhood education staff decreased by ~10% between March 2020 and November of 2021.</td>
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<td>• During the pandemic, approximately 1 in 3 North Carolinians reported symptoms of depression and/or anxiety</td>
<td>• Rate of children in NC discharged from EDs with a behavioral health condition increased by ~70% in the pandemic.</td>
<td>• Currently over 15,000 nurse vacancies in NC &amp; nationally, nursing turnover rates were 15.8% between August 2020 and 2021 (McKinsey).</td>
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<td>• Alcohol-related ED visits increased 13% from 2019 to 2020.</td>
<td>• ~25% of families missed a child’s preventive visit due to the pandemic</td>
<td>• In August 2020, 66.2% of public health workers nationwide reported feeling burnout (NIH).</td>
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<td>• Opioid overdose deaths increased 40% from July 2019 to July 2020.</td>
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The pandemic exacerbated existing challenges.
These priorities and our work across the department are grounded in **whole-person health**, driven by **equity**, and responsive to the lessons learned responding to the greatest health crisis in more than a generation.

*Behavioral Health & Resilience*

We need to offer services further upstream to build resiliency, invest in coordinated systems of care that **make mental health services easy to access** when and where they are needed and **reduce the stigma** around accessing these services.

*Child & Family Wellbeing*

We will work to ensure that North Carolina’s children grow up safe, healthy and thriving in nurturing and resilient families and communities. **Investing in families and children’s healthy development builds more resilient families, better educational outcomes and, in the long term, a stronger society.**

*Strong & Inclusive Workforce*

We will work to strengthen the **workforce that supports early learning, health and wellness by delivering services to North Carolina.** And we will take action to be an equitable workplace that lives its values and ensure that all people have the opportunity to be fully included members of their communities.

*The health insurance coverage gap coupled with insufficient access to affordable care disproportionately impacts Historically Marginalized Populations who have also experienced worse outcomes than others under COVID-19. Medicaid expansion would help close the health insurance coverage gap.*