

Increased enteric interview capacity and standardized investigation trainings using lessons learned from COVID-19



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The Arizona Department of Health Services trained COVID-19 rapid response team staff to conduct enteric disease investigations and developed standardized training materials. This helped satisfy a growing need for timely disease investigations and response assistance among county health departments.

The “What”

The COVID-19 pandemic presented public health with various challenges and highlighted areas of improvement. The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) food and waterborne team, needed to provide support to county partners in enteric case investigations as they work on COVID-19 response and build their resources and capacity. In addition, ADHS wanted to ensure all enteric cases reported to public health are followed up in a timely manner.

To accomplish this, ADHS decided to build an investigation team and develop training and education materials for enteric investigations to new staff. A senior communicable disease

investigator led the building of a robust enteric interview team through training COVID-19 investigators on the rapid response team to conduct enteric investigations. Funding for these staff is supported by the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for the Prevention and Control of Emerging Infectious Diseases (ELC) cooperative agreement. In addition, the team has worked to develop standardized training materials, such as Canvas (a web-based learning management system) courses, and a mock interview assessment form, which is now utilized by new investigators, staff, and county partners.

The “So What”

ADHS was successful in increasing its enteric interview capacity at the state level, taking on counties' cases for investigations as they worked on COVID-19 response and developing their resources and capacity. With the increased interview capacity, ADHS has been able to follow up on most enteric cases in a timely manner. There has been an increase in the percent of cases with an interview attempted for all morbidities. Specifically:

- Salmonellosis: 74% in 2016 to 91% in 2022
- Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli*: 76% in 2016 to 93% in 2022
- Listeriosis: 83% in 2016 to 100% in 2022
- Shigellosis: 78% in 2016 to 89% in 2022
- Campylobacteriosis: 34% in 2016 to 79% in 2022



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The training serves as a great guide to recall from time to time in case you forgot certain aspects of different morbidities, like the differences between Campy and Crypto, or Shigella and Salmonella, and it serves as the perfect starting point to becoming a successful interviewer.

When new investigators or staff join the team, the CANVAS courses, including the mock interviews have become an excellent training resource. In addition, some county partners utilize these training materials when they have new staff and/or need a refresher on certain topics.

Below are feedback from few members of the investigation team who have utilized the CANVAS training courses:

- "I found Canvas to be easy to follow and thorough."
- "Canvas training serves as a great guide to recall from time to time in case you forgot certain aspects of different morbidities, like the differences between Campy and Crypto, or Shigella and Salmonella, and it serves as the perfect starting point to becoming a successful interviewer. The other half of the training being hands on serves as a gateway to the experience needed to gain confidence, and it also helps to have a solid team of investigators to learn from."
- "Canvas provided the foundational knowledge necessary to understand each of the morbidities our team investigates."

The “Now What”

Initial training focused on interviewing Salmonella cases. This has been expanded to include CANVAS courses for Salmonellosis, Campylobacteriosis, Shigellosis, Cryptosporidium, and Yersiniosis. ADHS plans to expand the CANVAS training to additional pathogens, such as Vibriosis. The continued ELC funding is instrumental in putting together additional resources and courses as well as maintaining the

interview team. With these established training materials, ADHS has been able to standardize the interview responses as well as share them with our county partners for training their staff. In addition, the training materials have been shared with the Colorado Center of Excellence and they are being utilized at the national level, especially the mock interview assessment form.

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