

COVID-19 and other disease case classification and closeouts

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CATEGORY: Epidemiology & Laboratory Capacity (ELC)

The Wayne County Public Health Division (MI) utilized ELC funded staff to review, investigate, classify, and close-out COVID-19 and other disease cases. Their expertise allows for timely and accurate reporting of diseases and ensures the local health department has the capacity to continue to offer additional services.

The “What”

The Wayne County Public Health Division (WCPHD) utilized Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for the Prevention and Control of Emerging Infectious Diseases (ELC) cooperative agreement funded staff to assist in appropriately classifying and closing out COVID-19 and other disease cases in a timely manner in 2020, 2021, and 2022. ELC funded Epidemiologists are trained to review lab reports for multiple reportable conditions. They were assigned cases with an “unknown” or “suspect” disease case status to assess if the care met case classification. A separate team of ELC COVID-19 case investigators were tasked with investigating, classifying, and closing out COVID-19 cases.

The “So What”


Correct case classification allows for accurate reporting of diseases. Utilizing ELC staff to classify and close out cases enhanced the capacity of WCPHD to accurately and efficiently surveil cases of Streptococcus pneumoniae, group A Streptococcus, Influenza, and COVID-19 within the local health jurisdiction. This also ensured that WCPHD staff were available to continue disease surveillance and investigation for current cases and outbreaks and not spend excessive time reviewing

potential cases long past recovery or their infectious period. ELC funded epidemiologists classified and closed out approximately 5,000 Streptococcus pneumoniae, group A strep, and Influenza cases for 2021 and 2022. Additionally, ELC COVID-19 case investigators investigated, classified, and closed out a total of 325,624 COVID-19 cases from 2020-2022 (54,443 in 2020; 121,655 in 2021; and 149,526 in 2022).

The “Now What”

While COVID-19 public health emergency orders have been rescinded, COVID-19 remains a nationally notifiable disease with hundreds of cases still being reported each week to WCPHD. This is on top of the 80+ other mandatory reportable conditions and pathogens. ELC staff are an invaluable resource to local public health disease control and surveillance processes and programming. They have the skills and knowledge-base and have been successfully trained to investigate and classify several reportable conditions, including mpox, Streptococcus pneumoniae, group A strep, and Influenza. This allows for core, permanent WCPHD staff to focus on routine and higher priority surveillance and reporting needs.

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