



**NEVADA
HEALTH
RESPONSE**

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COVID-19 Press Bulletin for March 10, 2022

Carson City, NV — Today, Kyra Morgan, Chief Biostatistician, and Melissa Peek-Bullock, State Epidemiologist provided updates on the State's COVID-19 response with members of the media.

This bulletin provides facts, figures, and informational items from the call. As a reminder, data is provided in a dashboard on the home page of the [Nevada Health Response](#) website.

SUMMARY:

DISEASE SURVEILLANCE:

- There have been many changes in guidance and updates as Nevada has faced the COVID-19 pandemic as a state and nation.
- There are systems in place to support public health in our communities and Nevada now has many tools against COVID-19 — vaccination, therapeutics and the mitigation measures of hand washing, masks and social distancing.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently issued updated recommendations for the next phase of the pandemic.
- The State is shifting to community measures that focus on minimizing the impact of severe illness on health and society. This means:
 - Preventing medically significant illness;
 - Minimizing potential for strain on the health care system;
 - Protecting the most vulnerable through vaccines, therapeutics, and prevention
- There is no light switch to the endemic phase of COVID-19 but rather a process and the State is in the process.

- Just as the COVID-19 pandemic has evolved over time, the public health response has also evolved in response to both the changes within the virus and the way we measure community and health care impacts.
- As Nevada moves through the process of endemicity it is important that individuals feel empowered to take personal responsibility over their risk reduction decisions, with all the tools that are now readily available.

DASHBOARD AND PUBLIC REPORTING:

- Currently Nevada is seeing 129 new cases per day (14-day moving average). This is the lowest incidence the State has observed since nearly a year ago.
- There are 247 individuals hospitalized with COVID-19 in Nevada's hospitals; 48 are in the intensive care unit and 22 are on ventilators.
- These hospital statistics are also comparable to the lowest baseline that we observed from March through June 2021.
- As the State moves from a public health emergency to routine disease surveillance efforts, data sources and collection mechanisms will change.
- This means that not every positive case will receive a detailed investigation since the State will be focused on our high-risk populations.
- The introduction of tools such as at-home test kits make it impossible to measure testing capacity and test positivity rates at a population level.
- Community transmission indicators on Nevada's County Tracker were established in 2020, prior to the availability of vaccines and at-home test kits, and when the goal was to eliminate the spread of infection.
- That was also prior to any national guidance or standards from the CDC to monitor community level transmission.
- Because of these changes and as Nevada works toward the endemic stage some of the current indicators have become obsolete. More specifically, they:
 - Do not reflect medically significant disease or health care strain;
 - Are largely driven by case incidence, which doesn't differentiate between mild and severe disease; and
 - Are largely driven by testing volume and test positivity rates, which are incomplete with the expansion of at-home test kits
- Also, as COVID-19 becomes part of routine disease surveillance efforts negative lab reporting will no longer be required.
- The CDC's updated indicators for community transmission should be considered by all Nevadans as the official resource of assessing community risk.

- In line with this, the State will be updating Nevada's COVID-19 Dashboard to better coincide with the data we are now able to collect while looking toward long-term sustainability and reporting of disease surveillance efforts.
- Changes include:
 - The removal of the County Tracker and Dashboard pages related specifically to testing volume and test positivity rates.
 - Information on positive cases will be based exclusively on laboratory data.
 - Reinfections will be added to case counts. This means a case is counted as a reinfection if the individual tests positive more than 90 days after the original test result and will be considered a new case.
- The goal of these updates is to ensure the State is providing information that shows the trends and impacts on the community in a manner that is sustainable for the long term.
- The State's goal continues to be to help people be informed so they can make the best decisions for their health, the health of their families and communities.
- The frequency of Dashboard updates will be changed to once a week, in line with more traditional communicable disease reporting.
- Starting next week, in partnership with Nevada's Local Health Authorities, the State will move to updating Nevada's COVID-19 Dashboard and the Facilities Dashboard each Wednesday.
- The weekly update will bring the data current through the previous Monday to allow time for data processing.
- As the State does with other disease surveillance and reporting, the Department of Health and Human Services will continue to closely monitor these data, while providing weekly Dashboard updates to inform our communities.

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