JCHD COVID-19 Investigation and Contact Tracing Strategy – Updated 9/1/21

Background:
The surge in COVID-19 cases and reduction in resources has critically impacted the response efforts of Jefferson County Health Department (JCHD). This situation is due, in part, to county wide low vaccination rates, absence of mask requirements, new virus variants, and reduced staff capacity within JCHD and our partners. The Delta variant that is prevalent in our community has a viral load more than 1,000 times higher than previous variants, will cause 2x more infections, and on average an individual becomes infectious (both symptomatic and asymptomatic) 2-3 days sooner (3.7 days after initial contact to a positive); increasing the risk of clusters and outbreaks. This has drastically decreased the amount of time available to conduct an investigation.

Per Department of Health and Senior Services 19 CSR 20-20 the Health Department is responsible for the control and investigation of any disease or condition listed in 19 CSR 20-20 (COVID-19 has been declared a communicable disease and included in this list). Control and investigation include, but are not limited to, reporting, surveillance, isolation and quarantine, testing, and vaccinations. We do this by identifying and managing new cases and exposures, educating on best practices, and connecting individuals to community resources when needed.

JCHD is requesting to move forward with the following strategies to implement consistent communication and education to positive cases and close contacts. JCHD will continue to make strategic recommendations based on community transmission, staff capacity, and CDC (Center for Disease Control) guidance.

CDC Guidance for Prioritizing Investigations and Contact Tracing for COVID-19 in High Burden Jurisdictions:

Identifying Level of Burden per CDC Guidance:

- High burden is defined as a backlog of cases for each interviewer that is at least twice the number (100% more) they are able to interview each day.
- Medium burden is defined as a backlog of cases for each interviewer that is 50% more than the number of cases they can interview each day.
- Low burden is defined as a reasonable number of cases for each interviewer to call each day.

Prioritization of Cases per CDC Guidance:

- Congregate living facilities and settings with potential extensive transmission
- Individuals at risk for severe illness
- Disease clusters
- Individuals exposed in the last 6 days
Current Situation:

Jefferson County Health Department is currently operating in a high burden status. July of 2020 recorded 863 cases. July of 2021 recorded 1522. August 2020 recorded 1369, as of August 2021, JCHD has already recorded 2536. JCHD was awarded grant funding to pay 180 hours per week for investigation. A positive case investigation takes on average one hour. This allows for an average of 180 investigations a week when fully staffed. We are seeing approximately 100 per day. JCHD staff are unable to contact all incoming positive cases and their close contacts in a timely manner to prevent the further spread of disease. As a result, JCHD will use the following prioritization for case management:

- Congregate Living Facilities-Investigate all positive and probable cases and quarantine all individuals within the congregate setting
- Individuals ages 0-18 years of age-Investigate all positive and probable cases and quarantine all individuals within the congregate setting
  - This age group are associated with school settings which have a potential for extensive transmission
  - 0-11 do not have the opportunity to be vaccinated making them a vulnerable population
- Individuals over the age of 65 outside of congregate living facilities
- Cases that appear in geographical clusters or hot spots

Current Strategy:

Guidance for Congregate Settings and Schools: JCHD will prioritize cases associated with congregate settings and facilities at risk for extensive transmission, such as long-term care facilities (LTCF) and schools:

- Schools, LTCF and JCHD will continue to communicate any known positive and probable case
- Schools and LTCF will identify all individuals that have been exposed to the positive or probable case, based on CDC close contact definitions, and exclude those individuals from work or school immediately
  - School case contact information will be provided to JCHD through the Education Task Force at eduoutreach@jeffcohealth.org.
  - Long Term Care contact information will be directed through the JCHD Long Term Care Task Force at outreach@jeffcohealth.org.
- JCHD will assess risk status of all identified exposed individuals and work with schools and LTCF to implement appropriate quarantine strategies.
Recommendations for School Districts:

JCHD recommends universal masking requirements in our schools. When teachers, staff, and students consistently and correctly wear a mask, they protect others as well as themselves. Consistent and correct mask use is especially important indoors and in crowded settings, when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

- **Indoors**: CDC recommends indoor masking for all individuals age 2 years and older, including students, teachers, staff, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status.
- **Outdoors**: In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. CDC recommends that people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people. Fully vaccinated people might choose to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings if they or someone in their household is immunocompromised.

Exceptions can be made for the following categories of people:

- A person who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Discuss the possibility of reasonable accommodation with workers who are unable to wear or have difficulty wearing certain types of masks because of a disability.
- A person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by the relevant workplace safety guidelines or federal regulations.

Masks should meet one of the following criteria:

- [CDC mask recommendations](#)
- [NIOSH Workplace Performance and Workplace Performance Plus mask](#)

When universal masking is consistently utilized, we are able to:

- Reduce the number of close contacts to a positive case, therefore reducing the risk of illness
- Keep children and teachers in the classroom
  - This creates a safe environment, both physically and mentally, for our children to learn and grow.
- Keep children in extracurricular activities
- Reduce the need for parents/guardians to miss work due to quarantined children
Modified Quarantine Guidance in a School Setting:

Jefferson County Health Department (JCHD) met with county school districts to discuss strategies to provide safe and supportive learning environments for students, retain teachers and other staff, and enable parents, guardians, and caregivers to work as schools transition back to in-person learning in the Fall of 2021. District superintendents and members of the JCHD Covid-19 planning team reviewed 2020-21 school isolation and quarantine data to assess modifications that could be made to enable the preservation of in-person learning while maintaining a safe learning environment. The following information was submitted by the eleven public school districts in Jefferson County:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Contact Traced Students Quarantine Due to School Setting (Includes Athletics)</th>
<th>School Related Quarantine and Subsequent Positive Student</th>
<th>% of School Quarantine Student Subsequent Positive</th>
<th>Students Quarantine Due to Contact with Positive Case in Home Setting</th>
<th>Home Related Quarantine and Subsequent Positive Student</th>
<th>% of Home Quarantine Student Subsequent Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crystal City</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desoto</td>
<td>1194</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.09%</td>
<td>1317</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>9.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunklin</td>
<td>Unavailable at Publication Time</td>
<td>Unavailable at Publication Time</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Unavailable at Publication Time</td>
<td>Unavailable at Publication Time</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festus</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.48%</td>
<td>1189</td>
<td>Data Not Tracked</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>2612</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Data Not Tracked</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandview</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillsboro</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.66%</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>7.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson R-7</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.14%</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>1057</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
<td>1075</td>
<td>Data Not Tracked</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsor</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.62%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jefferson County Health Department will champion positive health outcomes and behaviors through innovative programs and community engagement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Contact Traced Employee Quarantine Due to School Setting (Includes Athletics)</th>
<th>School Related Quarantine and Subsequent Positive Employee</th>
<th>% of School Quarantine Employee Subsequent Positive</th>
<th>Employee Quarantine Due to Contact with Positive Case in Home Setting</th>
<th>Home Related Quarantine and Subsequent Positive Employee</th>
<th>% of Home Quarantine Employee Subsequent Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hillsboro</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desoto</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>22.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festus</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>Data Not Tracked</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson R-7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandview</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsor</td>
<td>Data Not Tracked</td>
<td>Data Not Tracked</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal City</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>71.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.64%</td>
<td>Data Not Tracked</td>
<td>Data Not Tracked</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>Data Not Tracked</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunklin</td>
<td>Unavailable at Publication Time</td>
<td>Unavailable at Publication Time</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Unavailable at Publication Time</td>
<td>Unavailable at Publication Time</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Schools policies incorporated several mandatory mitigation measures in 2020-21 that may or may not be incorporated in 2021-22 school year policies.

JCHD continues to recommend universal masking and vaccination as the greatest level of protection against COVID-19. Additional mitigation strategies include social distancing, enhanced hygiene practices, improved ventilation and isolation and quarantine. The following guidance utilizes the above referenced local district data to demonstrate the risk level for contacts to a home-based case or an in-school case. Data show that home-based contacts (parent, child, sibling positive and others in home are considered contacts) are more likely to convert from a contact to a positive case. Contacts to a positive case at school reported a 1-3% conversion rate compared to a 3-24% conversion rate in home-based cases.
Based on currently available data, JCHD and the Jefferson County Schools will implement a modified quarantine plan that will allow in-school contacts to continue in-person learning fully masked for the full 14-day quarantine. Schools must meet a case threshold in order to be eligible to implement the modified guidance. A school building with less than 4% of their population (students and staff) testing positive for COVID-19 will be eligible to implement the modified guidance. At 2% it is recommended that schools implement additional mitigation measures to reduce transmission rates. School buildings with 4% or higher cases are not eligible and will need to revert to the traditional in-home quarantine. This modification is intended as an additional mitigation strategy and is not a requirement. Current and future variants of COVID-19 transmission data, along with 2021/2022 school district data will be used to evaluate continued risk status of this strategy and adjustments will be made when needed. JCHD reiterates that there are risks associated with this modification, so each district is encouraged to ONLY use this strategy when it is supported by current data.

**Isolation (Applies to Positive and Probable Case):**
- All probable and positive cases will follow CDC isolation protocol
  - 10-day period from symptoms or test date for asymptomatic
- Individuals that test positive on an At-Home test (Point of Care without CLIA oversight) will isolate and follow all school illness policies. The risk of false positive on an At-Home test is extremely rare therefore we treat the case as being actively infectious while conducting our investigation. The investigation will determine if there is an active infection, or not, and if there is a risk of exposure to others. Quarantine will be followed once investigation is complete and confirms the risk of exposure.
  - We strongly recommend all individuals that test positive on an at-home test follow up with their healthcare provider and request a confirmatory test conducted under a CLIA authorized agency

**Close Contact Identification:**
- Someone within 6 ft of a positive or probable case for a cumulative period of 15 minutes or more
  - **NOTE:** CDC recognizes a 3–6-foot allowance for students who consistently wear properly fitted masks. This only applies to K-12 schools and college settings
- A number of factors can influence a person’s risk of exposure to COVID-19, including the type, proximity, and duration of their exposure

**Exclusion from Close Contact Identification:**
- Fully Vaccinated not be identified as a close contact if they are not experiencing symptoms
- Those that have a confirmatory positive test in the last 90 days will not be identified as a close contact if they are not experiencing symptoms
- Students distanced 3-6 feet from positive case when both the case and close contact wore properly fitted masks consistently will not be identified as a close contact.
Quarantine (Applies to household exposures to a positive case):

- 14-day Period from last exposure
- Close contacts that will be required to complete quarantine within their home
  - Household Contacts are siblings or children of a positive case within the home
  - Individuals that are unable to comply with modified quarantine policy
  - Quarantine letter will be provided to parents to inform of full quarantine guidelines

Modified Quarantine (Eligible for “in-school” exposures to a positive case):

- **Outside of school setting, all in-home quarantine requirements still apply.**
- Close contacts of an in-school exposure may be allowed the following modifications to quarantine. Modified Quarantine will allow students to remain in school during quarantine period if able to comply with following policy
  1. Letters will go home to parents to inform them of the potential risk and the modified quarantine guidelines that will be applicable for students
  2. Masks MUST be worn on transportation
  3. Exposed case WILL wear a properly fitting mask, consistently throughout the day, during the 14-day period
  4. All children and teachers in elementary classrooms will mask when there has been a positive case identified for the duration of the 14-day period.
  5. Social Distancing will be maintained when possible
  6. Lunch will be provided in a designated area for those on modified quarantine
     a. This eliminates risk to others during a time when a mask cannot be worn.
     b. Elementary will eat lunch in their classroom or other designated areas

Quarantine Guidance for extracurricular activities:

**Modified quarantine will not apply to extracurricular activities**

1. Students who are fully vaccinated, have been diagnosed with Covid in the previous 90 days, or were confirmed to have had an “in-school” exposure where both students were properly wearing well-fitting masks and are exposures will **NOT** need to abstain from athletic competition or extracurricular activities.
2. Students who do not meet the above-mentioned criteria will be required to abstain from extracurricular activities and athletic competition for the full 14 day quarantine period.
3. Students following in-school modified quarantine guidelines will be allowed to **OBSERVE** activities while social distancing and wearing a mask.
Release from Full Quarantine or CDC accepted methods to reduce in-home Quarantine

- Complete 14-day period without developing symptoms for Full Release
- If using reduced in-home quarantine protocol (7 or 10 day) Individuals MUST continue to wear masks, social distance, and monitor for symptoms for the full 14-day period
  - Complete 10-day period without developing symptoms for Reduced Quarantine
  - Complete 7-day period with a negative confirmatory test result AFTER day 5 for Reduced Quarantine

Guidance for Community Members and Employers:

- When an individual or employer is made aware of a positive result, they will follow appropriate CDC guidelines and help identify close contacts.
  - Positive individuals should isolate and NOT return to work
  - Identified close contacts should be notified to quarantine and NOT return to work
- Based upon the current level of agency burden, investigations will be completed according to CDC guidelines

Public Health Alerts:

When close contacts associated with LTCF, Schools or other settings with the potential for extensive transmission cannot be notified due to medium or high agency burden levels JCHD may utilize a Public Health Alert:

- Public Health Alerts will be posted on the JCHD Website and Social Media outlets
- Alert will be used to quickly notify county residence of exposures and provide education and guidance on how to quarantine and/or self-monitor
- Alert will also provide notification to the public of a high-risk situation when investigations are not able to identify close contacts to a positive case.
  - If all close contacts are notified no Alert will be issued
  - If further investigation identifies and notifies close contacts, Alert will be removed
- Alerts will remain on the JCHD website until the 14-day quarantine period is completed or until all close contacts have been identified
Additional Clarifications:

**CSTE (Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists) COVID-19 Case Definitions as of August 7, 2021:**

**Confirmed:**
- Meets confirmatory evidence, such as a Positive result from a PCR or Lamp test performed under a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certified facility

**Probable:** case is on that has met one of the following criteria:
- Meets clinical criteria AND epidemiological link with no confirmatory or presumptive laboratory evidence
- Meets presumptive laboratory evidence OR
  - Antigen test performed under a CLIA certified facility
- Meets vital record criteria with no confirmatory laboratory evidence

**Suspect:**
- Meets supportive laboratory evidence with no prior history of being a confirmed or probable case
  - Detection of Antibodies, OR
  - Positive Antigen test done without CLIA certified oversight. (At-Home Antigen tests performed outside of a CLIA certified facility)
- Suspect cases are not considered active infections unless upon investigation the case can meet Confirmed or Probable criteria
- Suspect cases are not counted as cases and are not reflected in reported data.

**CDC Guidance for Isolation and Quarantine:**

**Isolation:**
- All COVID-19 Positive and Probable Cases must isolate at home
- Criteria to be met to be released from isolation
  - At least 10 days have passed from symptom onset with a significant improvement in symptoms
  - OR - At least 10 days have passed from test date if the patient is asymptomatic

**Quarantine:**
- Someone within 6 ft of a positive or probable case for a cumulative period of 15 minutes or more
  - **NOTE:** CDC recognizes a 3–6-foot allowance for students who consistently wear properly fitted masks. This only applies to K-12 schools and college settings
  - A number of factors can influence a person’s risk of exposure to COVID-19, including the type, proximity, and duration of their exposure
Criteria to be released from quarantine:

- 14 days have passed since the last exposure to a positive or probable case
- Options to reduce quarantine are as follows, but not recommended. Continue to self-monitor, social distance when possible and wear mask for the 14-day period.
  - Quarantine can end after Day 10 without testing if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring.
  - Quarantine can end after Day 7 after receiving a negative test result and no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring (diagnostic test must occur on Day 5 or later).

Individuals that DO NOT have to quarantine. (Individuals should continue to self-monitor, social distance when possible and wear masks during the 14-day quarantine period.)

- People who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and recovered do not have to quarantine or get tested again if they do not develop new symptoms.
- People who develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID-19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.
- People who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 are not required to quarantine if they have been fully vaccinated against the disease and show no symptoms. (Individuals are considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after completion of the full series)
  - Fully vaccinated individuals should be tested 3-5 days after exposure even if they do not have symptoms and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative
- Student exposures when both the positive/probable case and the contact both wore correct fitting masks consistently. This only applies in K-12 and college settings.

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Definition:

Congregate Living Facility:

A facility where persons reside and share common spaces with other residents. “Congregate living facility” shall include, but is not limited to, residential care facilities, assisted living facilities, intermediate care facilities, skilled nursing facilities, jails, prisons, mental health facilities, dormitories, and resident summer camps. “Congregate living facility” shall not include hospitals, apartments, or condominiums.