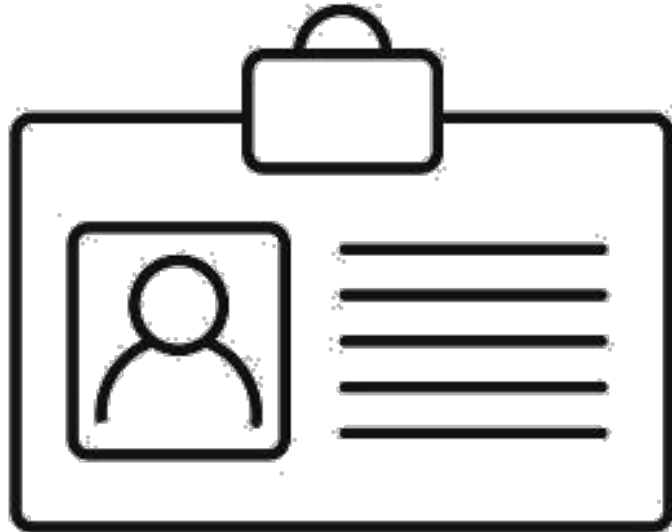




Georgia Department of Public Health:  
GDPH Office Hours for ALF and PCH  
October 27, 2023

# Meet the Team



## Presenters:

**Amy Ward, MS, BSN, RN, CIC, FAPIC**

Patient Safety Manager  
Alliant Health Solutions

**Donald Chitanda, MPH, CIC, LTC-CIP**

Infection Prevention Technical Advisor  
Alliant Health Solutions

# Amy Ward, MS, BSN, RN, CIC, FAPIC

## Patient Safety Manager

Amy is a registered nurse with a diverse background in acute care nursing, microbiology, epidemiology and infection control. She is passionate about leading and mentoring new and future infection preventionists in their career paths and assisting them in reducing healthcare-associated infections across the continuum of care.

Amy enjoys spending time with her family and being outdoors camping, bicycling and running.

Contact: [Amy.Ward@AlliantHealth.org](mailto:Amy.Ward@AlliantHealth.org)



# Donald Chitanda, MPH, CIC, LTC-CIP

## Infection Prevention Technical Advisor

Donald is a health professional with experience in public health epidemiology and infection prevention. Over the past several years, he worked as an infection preventionist at the hospital- and system-level, where he was part of a task force to ensure the safety of caregivers and patients during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, he was part of and led several projects to reduce hospital-acquired infections utilizing Lean Six Sigma methodologies. He is also trained in ensuring ongoing facility survey readiness for regulatory agencies such as the CMS and The Joint Commission.

Donald enjoys spending time with family and doing outdoor activities.

Contact: [Donald.Chitanda@AlliantHealth.org](mailto:Donald.Chitanda@AlliantHealth.org)



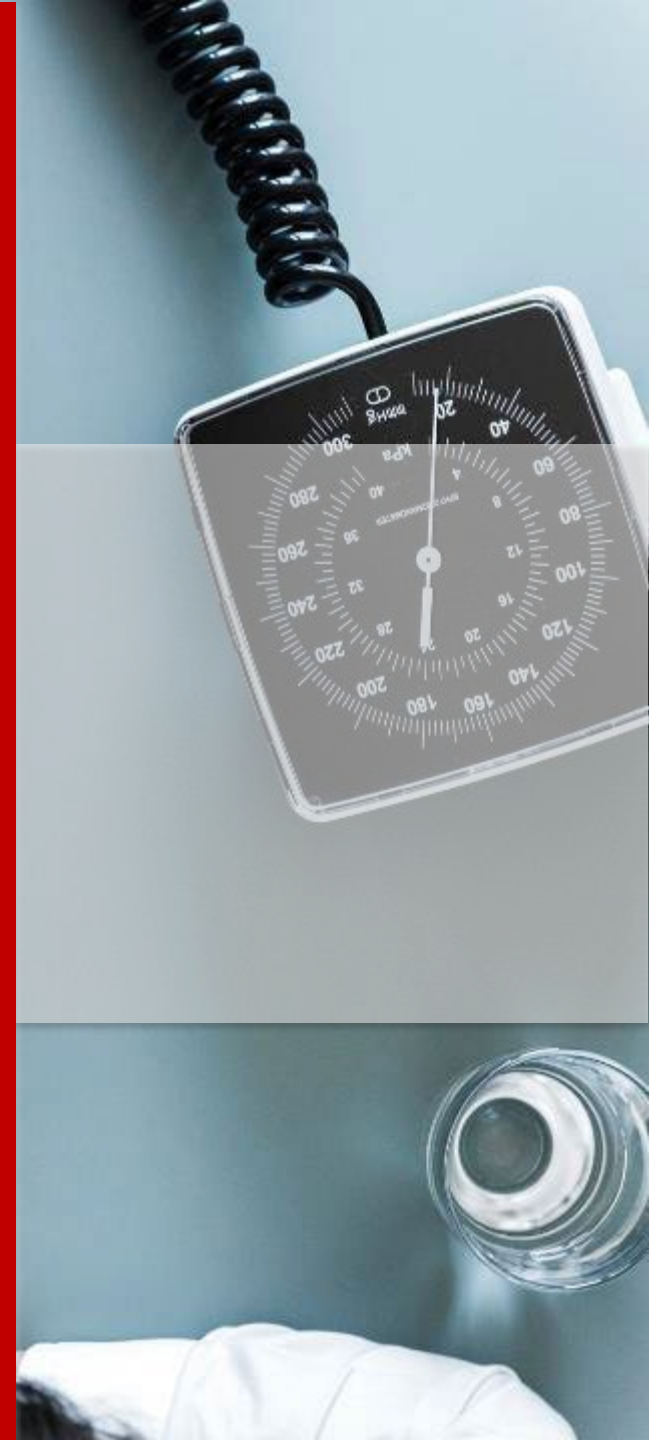
# Thank You to Our Partners

- Georgia Department of Public Health
- University of Georgia



# Learning Objectives

- Learners will be updated on COVID-19 epidemiology and infection prevention interventions
- Learners will be able to understand IPC best practices as it relates to social gatherings and food safety



# COVID-19 Update



# CDC COVID-19 Data Tracker

## COVID-19 Update for the United States

### Early Indicators

#### Test Positivity >

% Test Positivity

9.5%

(October 8 to October 14, 2023)

Trend in % Test Positivity

**-0.7%** in most recent week



Aug 26, 2023

Oct 14, 2023

#### Emergency Department Visits >

% Diagnosed as COVID-19

1.3%

(October 8 to October 14, 2023)

Trend in % Emergency Department Visits

**-11.9%** in most recent week



Aug 26, 2023

Oct 14, 2023

### Severity Indicators

#### Hospitalizations >

Hospital Admissions

16,158

(October 8 to October 14, 2023)

Trend in Hospital Admissions

**-5%** in most recent week



Aug 26, 2023

Oct 14, 2023

#### Deaths >

% of All Deaths in U.S. Due to COVID-19

2.5%

(October 8 to October 14, 2023)

Trend in % COVID-19 Deaths

**+4.2%** in most recent week



Aug 26, 2023

Oct 14, 2023

These early indicators represent a portion of national COVID-19 tests and emergency department visits. [Wastewater](#) information also provides early indicators of spread.

Total Hospitalizations

6,422,520

Total Deaths

1,148,691




CDC | Test Positivity data through: October 14, 2023; Emergency Department Visit data through: October 14, 2023; Hospitalization data through: October 14, 2023; Death data through: October 14, 2023.  
 Posted: October 20, 2023 12:00 PM ET





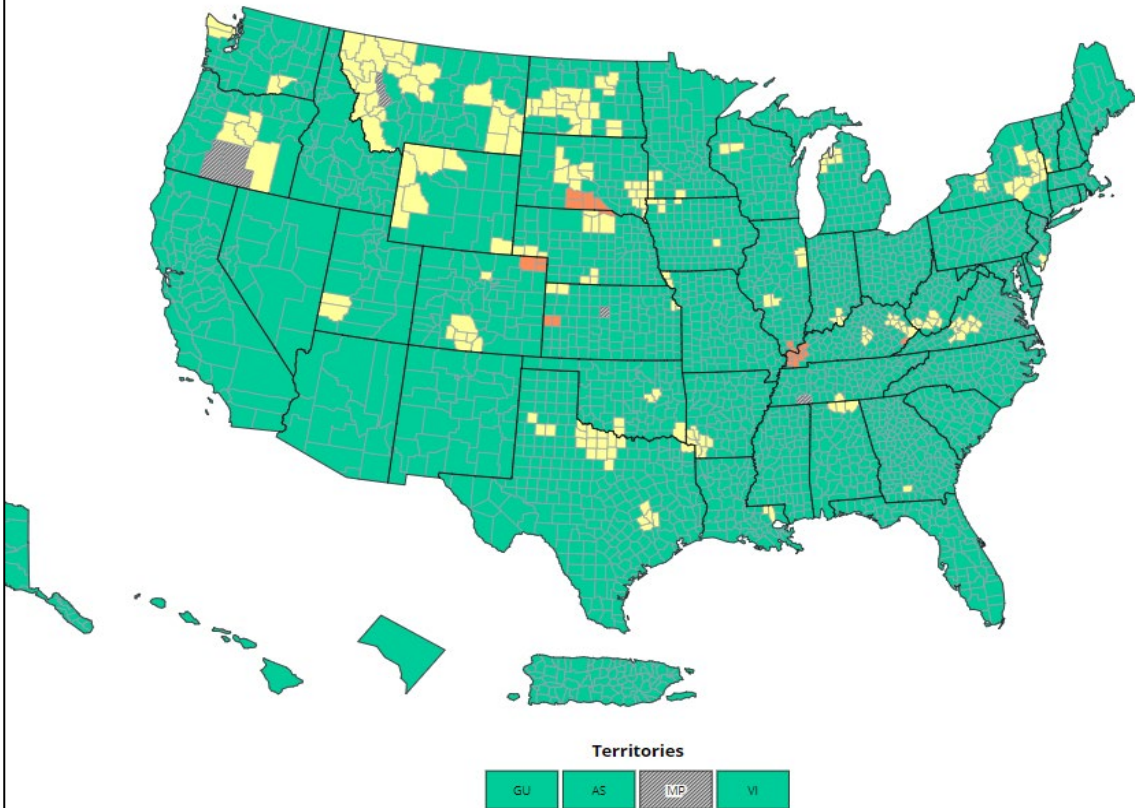
**COVID-19 hospital admissions levels in U.S. by county**

Based on new COVID-19 hospital admissions per 100,000 population

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>% Change</b>
 ≥ 20.0	22	0.68%	-0.28%
 10.0 - 19.9	213	6.62%	0.71%
 <10.0	2982	92.7%	-0.53%

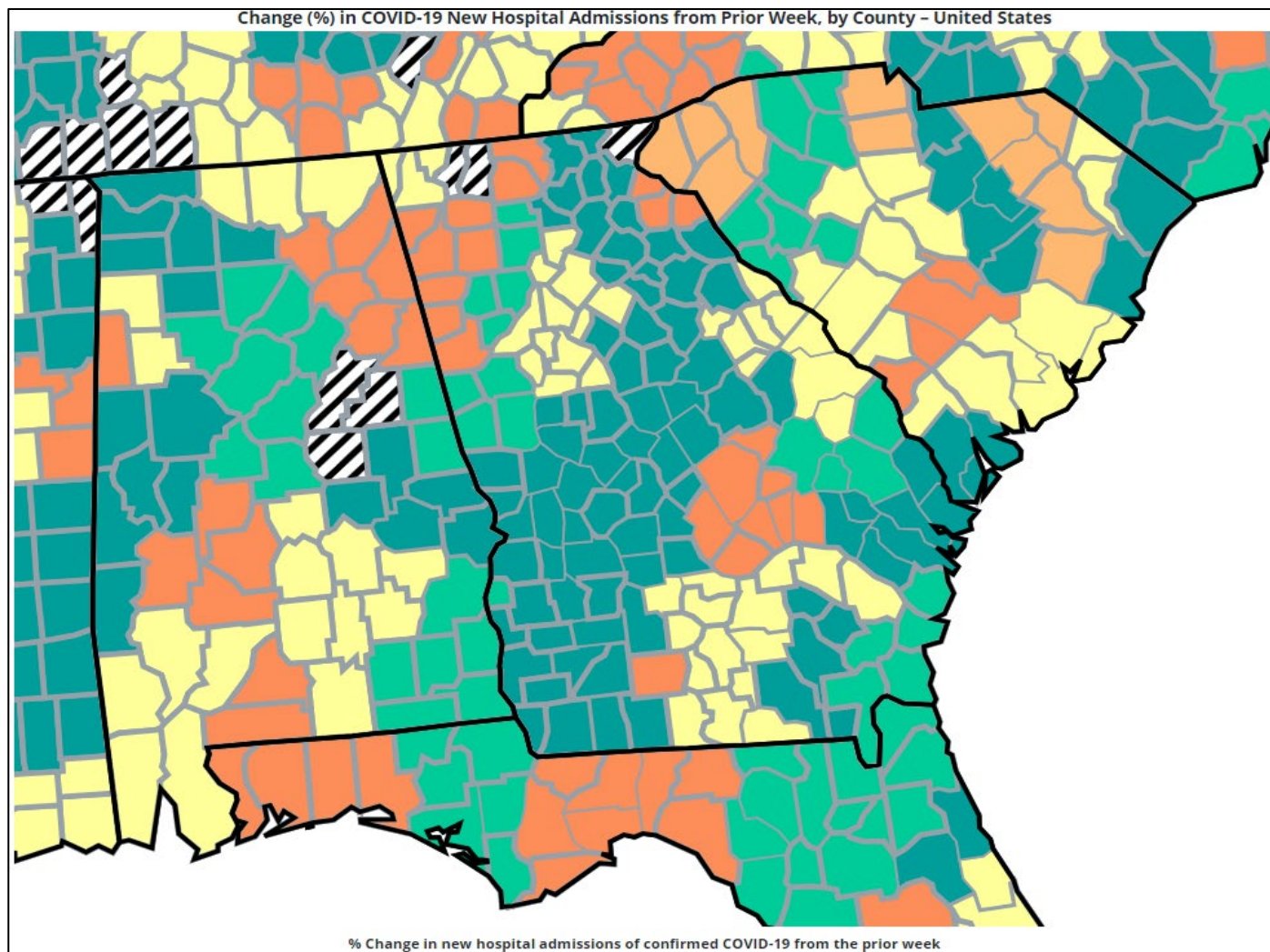
Time Period: New COVID-19 hospital admissions per 100,000 population (7-day total) are calculated using data from the MMWR week (Sun-Sat) ending October 14, 2023.

**Reported COVID-19 New Hospital Admissions Rate per 100,000 Population in the Past Week, by County - United States**




**View Maps >**  
of Hospitalizations,  
Deaths, Emergency  
Department Visits,  
and Test Positivity

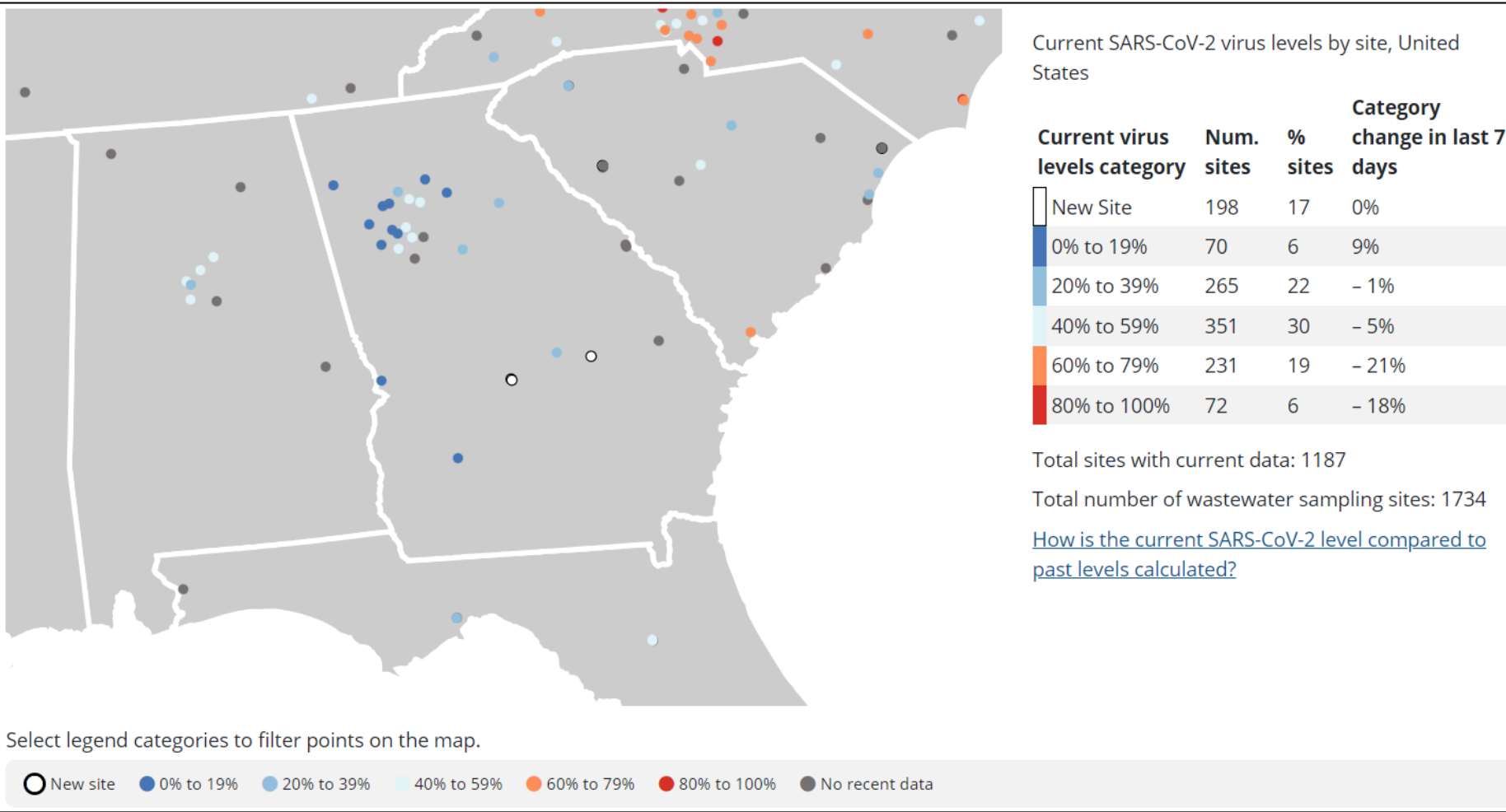
<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases-new-admissions-rate-county>



● Substantial Decrease: ( $\leq -20.0\%$ )   ● Moderate Decrease (-19.9% to -10.0%)   ● Stable (-9.9% to 9.9%)   ● Moderate Increase (10.0% to 19.9%)   ● Substantial Increase ( $\geq 20.0\%$ )  
▨ Insufficient data

[https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases\\_new-admissions-percent-change-county](https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases_new-admissions-percent-change-county)

# Wastewater Surveillance

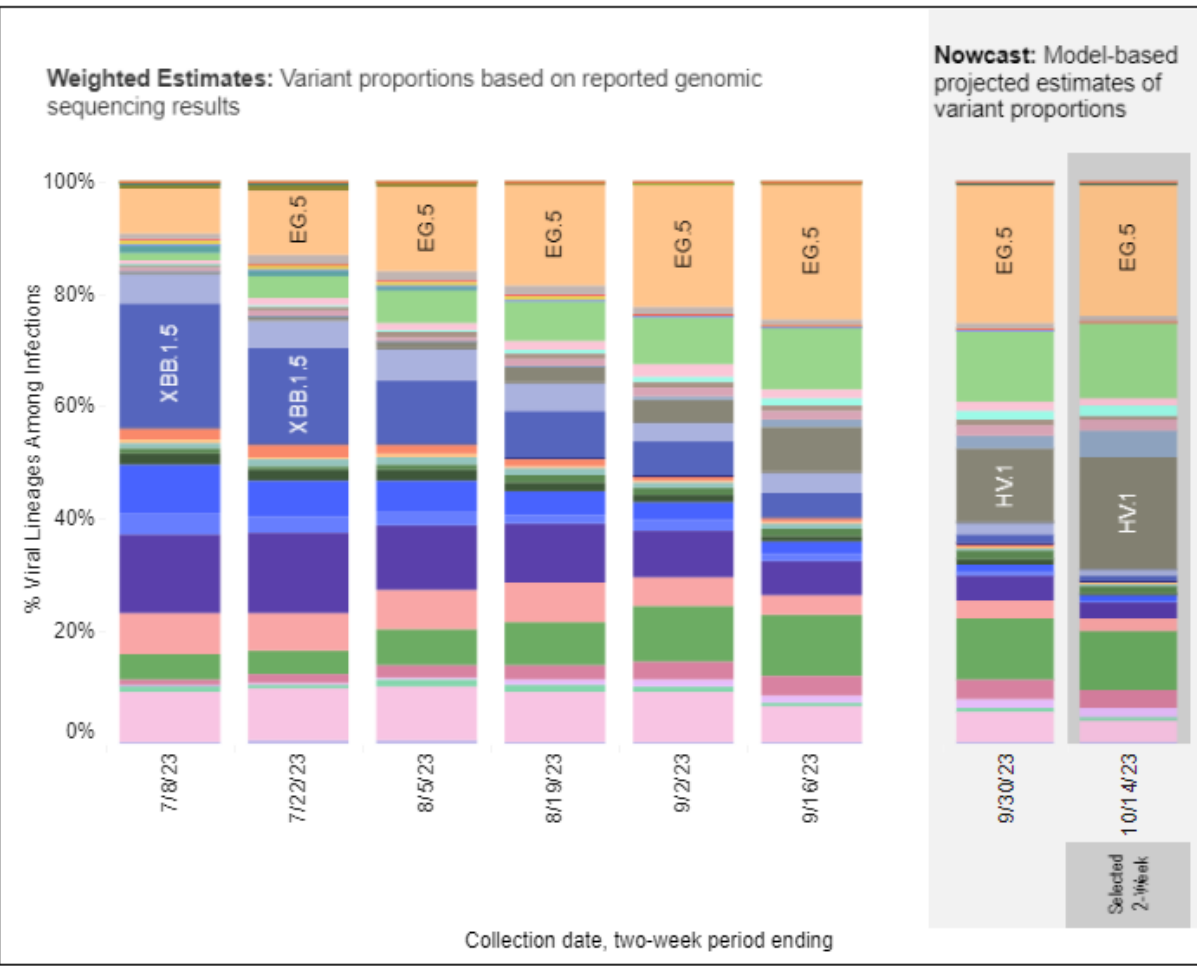


<https://www.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#wastewater-surveillance>



### Weighted and Nowcast Estimates in United States for 2-Week Periods in 6/25/2023 – 10/14/2023

Hover over (or tap in mobile) any lineage of interest to see the amount of uncertainty in that lineage's estimate.



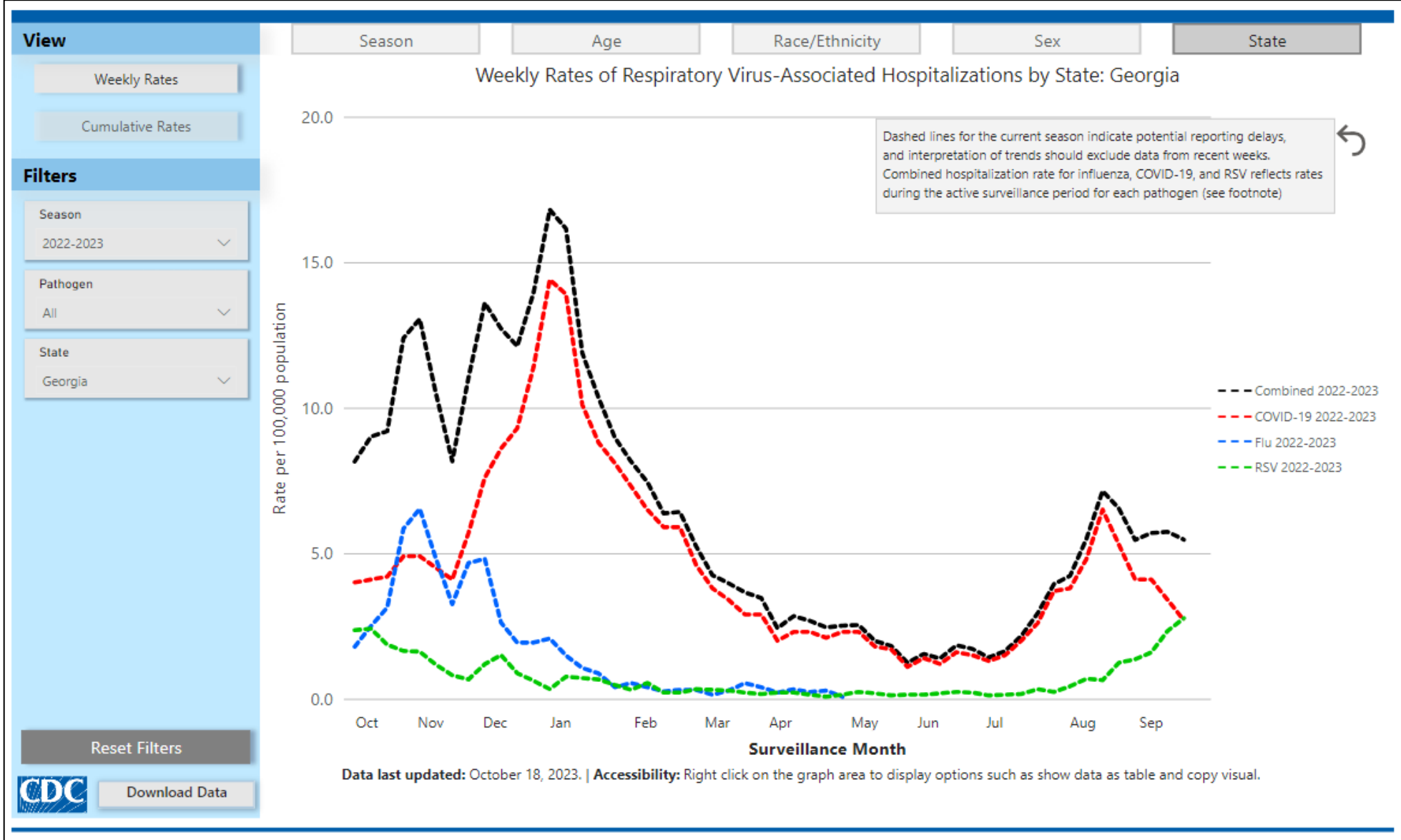
### Nowcast Estimates in United States for 10/1/2023 – 10/14/2023

USA			
WHO label	Lineage #	%Total	95%PI
Omicron	EG.5	23.6%	21.2-26.3%
	HV.1	19.5%	16.8-22.6%
	FL.1.5.1	13.5%	10.8-16.7%
	XBB.1.16.6	10.3%	9.1-11.8%
	HK.3	4.9%	3.6-6.7%
	XBB.2.3	4.1%	3.4-4.9%
	XBB.1.16.11	3.1%	2.5-3.9%
	XBB.1.16	2.8%	2.4-3.3%
	XBB.1.16.1	2.2%	1.7-2.7%
	XBB.1.16.15	1.8%	1.3-2.4%
	HF.1	1.7%	1.2-2.4%
	GK.1.1	1.6%	1.3-2.1%
	XBB	1.4%	1.2-1.7%
	GE.1	1.4%	1.0-1.9%
	XBB.1.5.70	1.2%	0.8-1.8%
	GK.2	0.9%	0.7-1.2%
	XBB.1.5	0.9%	0.7-1.0%
	EG.6.1	0.8%	0.6-1.2%
	XBB.1.9.1	0.8%	0.6-1.0%
	XBB.1.5.72	0.6%	0.4-0.8%
	XBB.1.5.68	0.5%	0.3-0.8%
	XBB.1.9.2	0.5%	0.4-0.7%
	XBB.1.42.2	0.5%	0.3-0.8%
	BA.2	0.3%	0.1-0.8%
	XBB.1.5.10	0.3%	0.2-0.4%
	CH.1.1	0.2%	0.1-0.3%
	XBB.2.3.8	0.2%	0.1-0.3%
	XBB.1.5.59	0.1%	0.1-0.2%
	FD.1.1	0.1%	0.1-0.1%
	FE.1.1	0.1%	0.0-0.1%
	XBB.1.5.1	0.0%	0.0-0.0%
	EU.1.1	0.0%	0.0-0.0%
	B.1.1.529	0.0%	0.0-0.0%
	BQ.1	0.0%	0.0-0.0%
	FD.2	0.0%	0.0-0.0%
Other	Other*	0.0%	0.0-0.1%

# SARS-CoV-2 Variant Surveillance

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#variant-proportions>



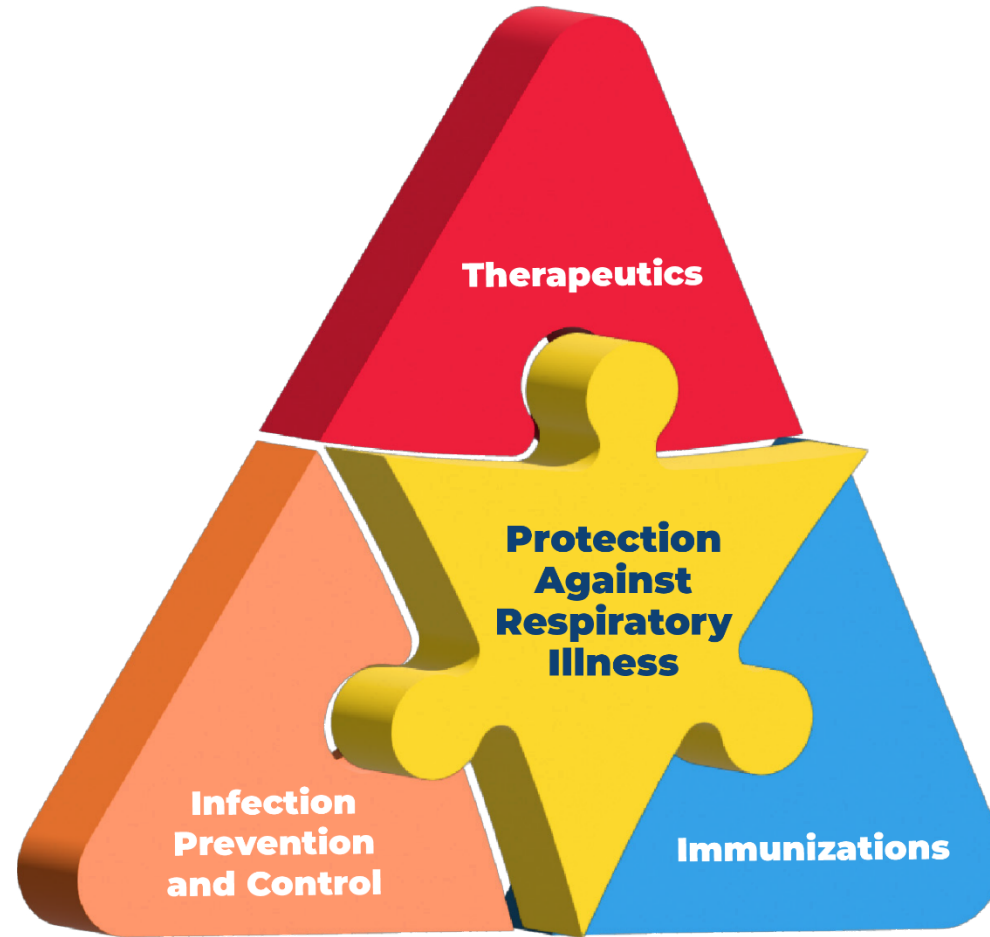


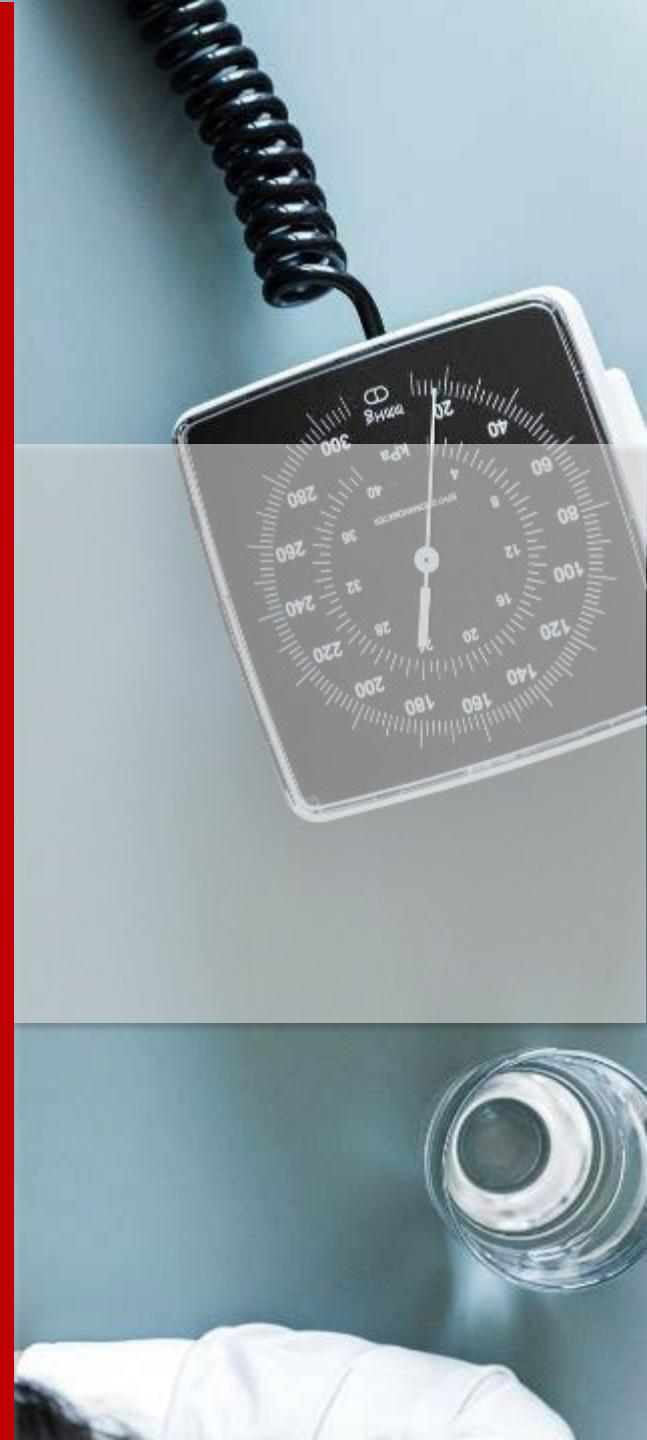
## RESP-NET Surveillance

<https://www.cdc.gov/surveillance/resp-net/dashboard.html>



# Safety Strategy





# IPC Best Practices for Gatherings During the Holiday Season and Food Safety



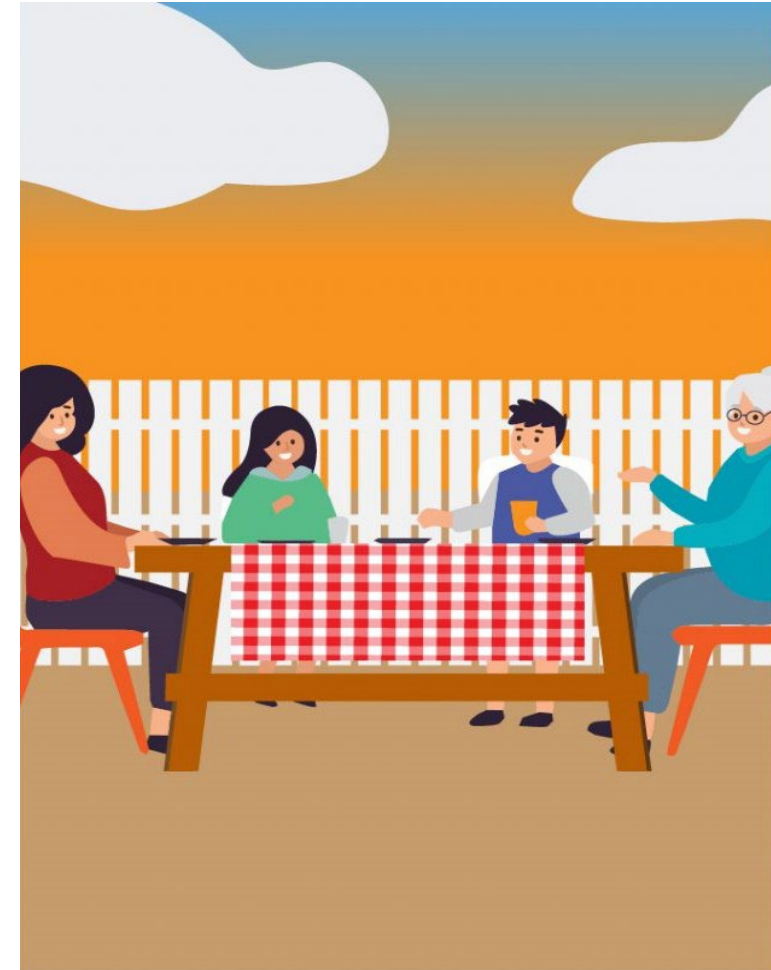
# The COVID-19 PHE Is Over. Now What?

- Nursing homes have been severely impacted by COVID-19, with outbreaks causing high rates of infection, morbidity and mortality
- Now that the COVID-19 PHE is over, facilities should continue to remain vigilant to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses



# Small Gatherings

Small gatherings are informal and typically include family and friends you regularly socialize with. They can be indoor or outdoor. These social gatherings are more intimate, such as small holiday parties, family dinners and special celebrations.



# Visitation

- For the safety of the visitor(s), residents should be encouraged to limit in-person visits while they are infectious.
  - Encourage alternative mechanisms for patient and visitor interactions, such as video-call applications on cell phones or tablets, when appropriate.
- Facilities should provide instructions before visitors enter the resident's room on hand hygiene, limiting surfaces touched, and use of PPE according to current facility policy.
- Per CMS, facilities must allow indoor visitation for all residents as permitted under the regulations. While previously acceptable during the COVID-19 PHE, facilities can no longer limit the frequency and length of visits, the number of visitors, or require advance scheduling of visits.
- Although there is no limit on the number of visitors that a resident can have at one time, visits should be conducted in a manner that adheres to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention and does not increase the risk to other residents.

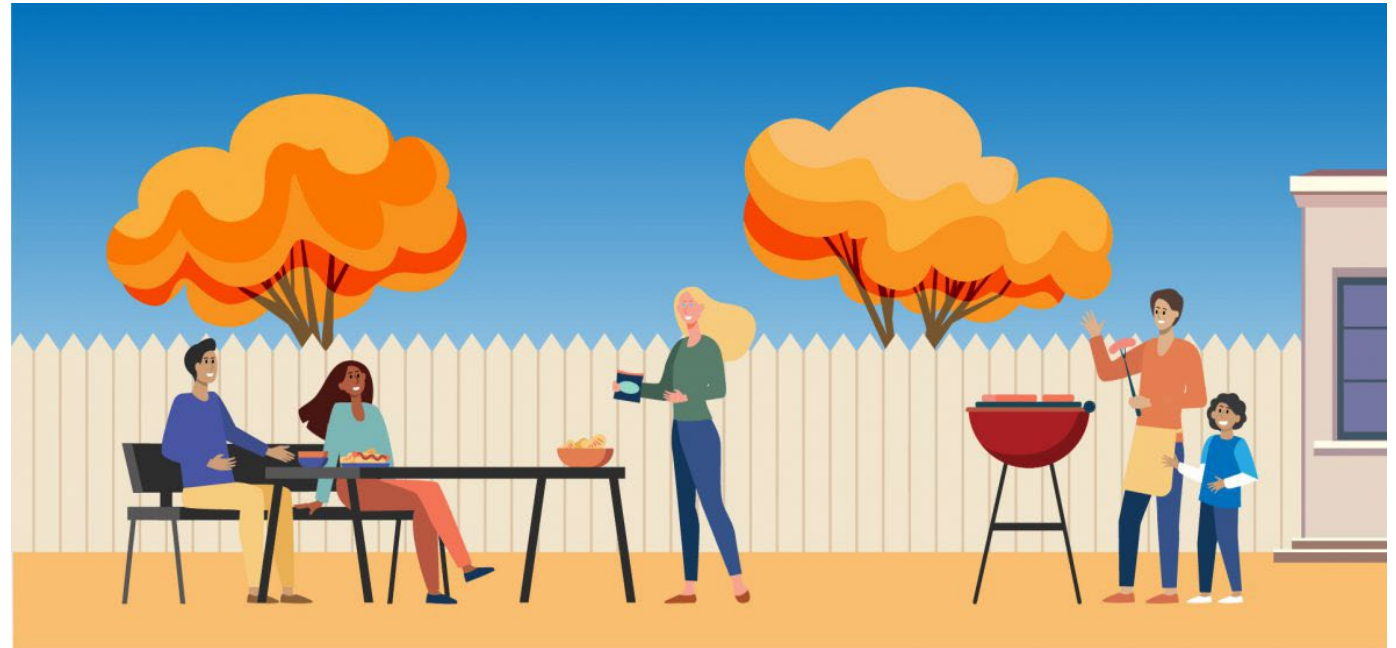
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/gso-20-39-nh-revised.pdf>

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fhcp%2Flong-term-care.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fhcp%2Flong-term-care.html)

# Outdoor Visitation

Outdoor visits generally pose a lower risk of transmission due to increased space and airflow.

For outdoor visits, facilities should create accessible and safe outdoor spaces for visitation, such as courtyards, patios or parking lots. Include the use of tents if available.



# Indoor Visitation

- Indoor visits may increase the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses due to decreased space and airflow.
- For indoor visits, facilities should maintain healthy environments.



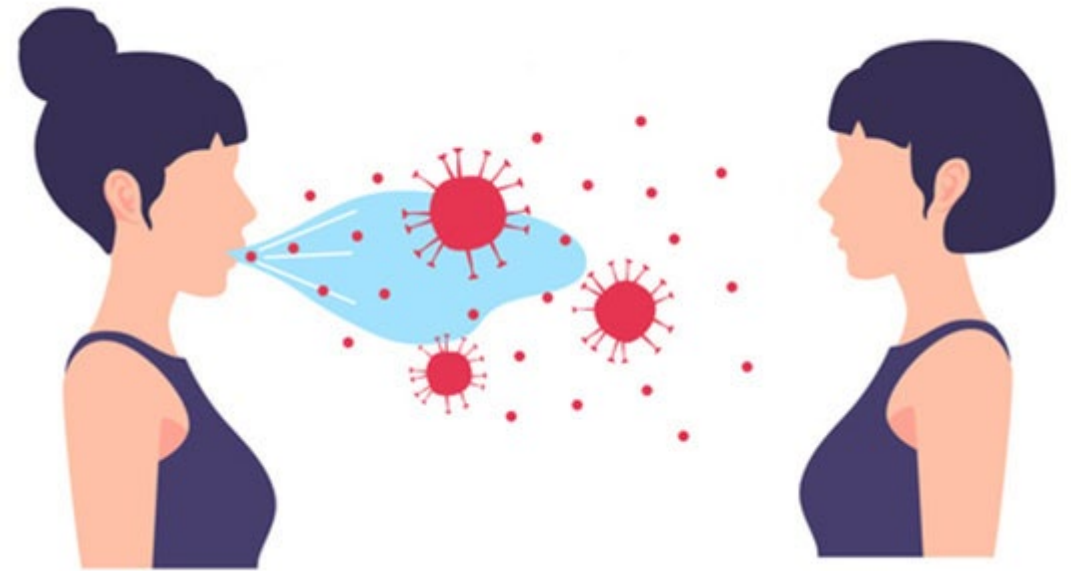
# Improve Ventilation

- Improving ventilation (moving air into, out of or within a room) and filtration (trapping particles on a filter to remove them from the air) can help prevent virus particles from accumulating in indoor air.
- Improving ventilation and filtration can help protect residents and others from becoming infected with COVID-19 and other illnesses.



# Increase Space and Distance

- Small particles that people breathe out can contain virus particles
- The closer people are together, the increased risk of transmission of viruses
- To avoid possible exposures, increase space and distance among residents and visitors



# Implement Source Control Using CDC COVID-19 Data and RESP-NET Surveillance

- Source control refers to using respirators, well-fitting facemasks or cloth masks to cover a person's mouth and nose to prevent the spread of respiratory secretions when they are breathing, talking, sneezing or coughing
- CDC's COVID-19 hospital admission levels provide information about the amount of severe illness in your community to help you decide when to take action to protect yourself and others
- The Respiratory Virus Hospitalization Surveillance Network (RESP-NET) comprises three networks that conduct population-based surveillance for laboratory-confirmed hospitalizations associated with COVID-19, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and influenza among children and adults



# Stay Up-To-Date With Vaccines

- The CDC recommends that everyone aged 5 years and older should receive one dose of an updated COVID-19 vaccine to protect against serious illness from COVID-19
- Routine annual influenza vaccination is recommended for all persons aged  $\geq 6$  months who do not have contraindications
- New RSV vaccines are available for adults 60 and older. The CDC recommends that adults 60 and older may receive a single dose of the RSV vaccine using shared clinical decision-making





# Encourage Testing for COVID-19

- Anyone with even mild symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, should receive a viral test for SARS-CoV-2 as soon as possible
- Asymptomatic residents with close contact with someone with SARS-CoV-2 infection should have a series of three viral tests for SARS-CoV-2 infection
  - Testing is recommended immediately (but not before 24 hours after the exposure).
  - If negative, test again 48 hours after the first negative test. If negative again, test 48 hours after the second negative test.
  - This will typically be on Day 1 (where day of exposure is Day 0), Day 3, and Day 5



# Post Visual Alerts

- Continue to post visual alerts (e.g., signs, posters) at the entrance and in strategic places (e.g., waiting areas, elevators, cafeterias)
- These alerts should include instructions about current IPC recommendations (e.g. when to use source control and perform hand hygiene)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>



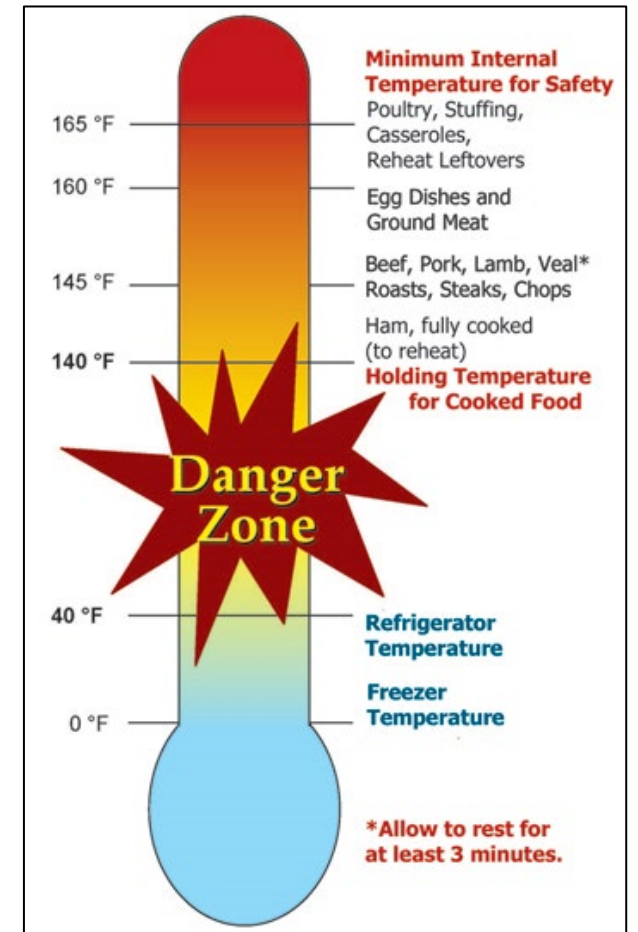
# Food Safety for the Holidays

- Keep foods separated, such as meat, chicken, turkey, seafood and eggs, from all other foods that won't be cooked before eating, such as fruit, salad greens, deli salads
- Prevent juices from meat, chicken, turkey, and seafood from dripping or leaking onto other foods by keeping them in containers or sealed plastic bags.
- Cook food thoroughly using a food thermometer to ensure meat, chicken, turkey, seafood, and eggs have been cooked to a safe internal temperature to kill germs
- Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils and countertops with hot, soapy water or in the dishwasher after preparing each food item
- Avoid contamination by providing utensils (e.g., spoons, forks, tongs, etc.) for each food item so people do not touch the food with bare hands



# Keep Food out of the “Danger Zone”

- Leaving food out too long at room temperature can cause bacteria (such as Staphylococcus aureus, Salmonella Enteritidis, Escherichia coli O157:H7, and Campylobacter) to grow to dangerous levels that can cause illness.
- Bacteria grow most rapidly in the range of temperatures between 40 °F and 140 °F, doubling in number in as little as 20 minutes. This range of temperatures is called the “Danger Zone.”
- Never leave food out of refrigeration for over two hours (if the temperature is above 90 °F, food should not be left out for more than 1 hour).
- Keep hot food hot at or above 140 °F and place cooked food in chafing dishes, preheated steam tables, warming trays, and/or slow cookers.
- Keep cold food cold at or below 40 °F and place food in containers on ice.



# Perform Routine Cleaning and Monitoring of Microwaves, Refrigerators and Ice Machines

- Microorganisms may be present in microwaves, refrigerators, ice, ice-storage chests and ice-making machines
- Ensure that refrigerators designated for specific use (i.e., resident food, staff food, medications, and specimens) will be clearly labeled as such
- Store all refrigerated or frozen foods in covered containers or completely sealed
- Resident and staff refrigerators should be cleaned at least weekly and as needed
- All resident food and beverages should be dated and discarded after an appropriate time interval, such as 48 hours after opening

# Don't Forget Hand Hygiene!

Handwashing is especially important during key times when germs can spread easily. These include:

- Before, during and after preparing any food
- After handling uncooked meat, chicken or other poultry, seafood, flour, or eggs
- Before and after using gloves to prevent germs from spreading to your food and your hands
- Before eating
- After touching garbage
- After wiping counters or cleaning other surfaces with chemicals
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose



# Infection Control Actions to Take During Respiratory Virus Season

- Check that the air handling in your facility is functioning as it should
- Consider broad source control in health care facilities during respiratory virus season
- Use data for local decisions
- Help everyone practice respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
- Promote hand hygiene with everyone in the facility
- Practice regular environmental cleaning

# Resources

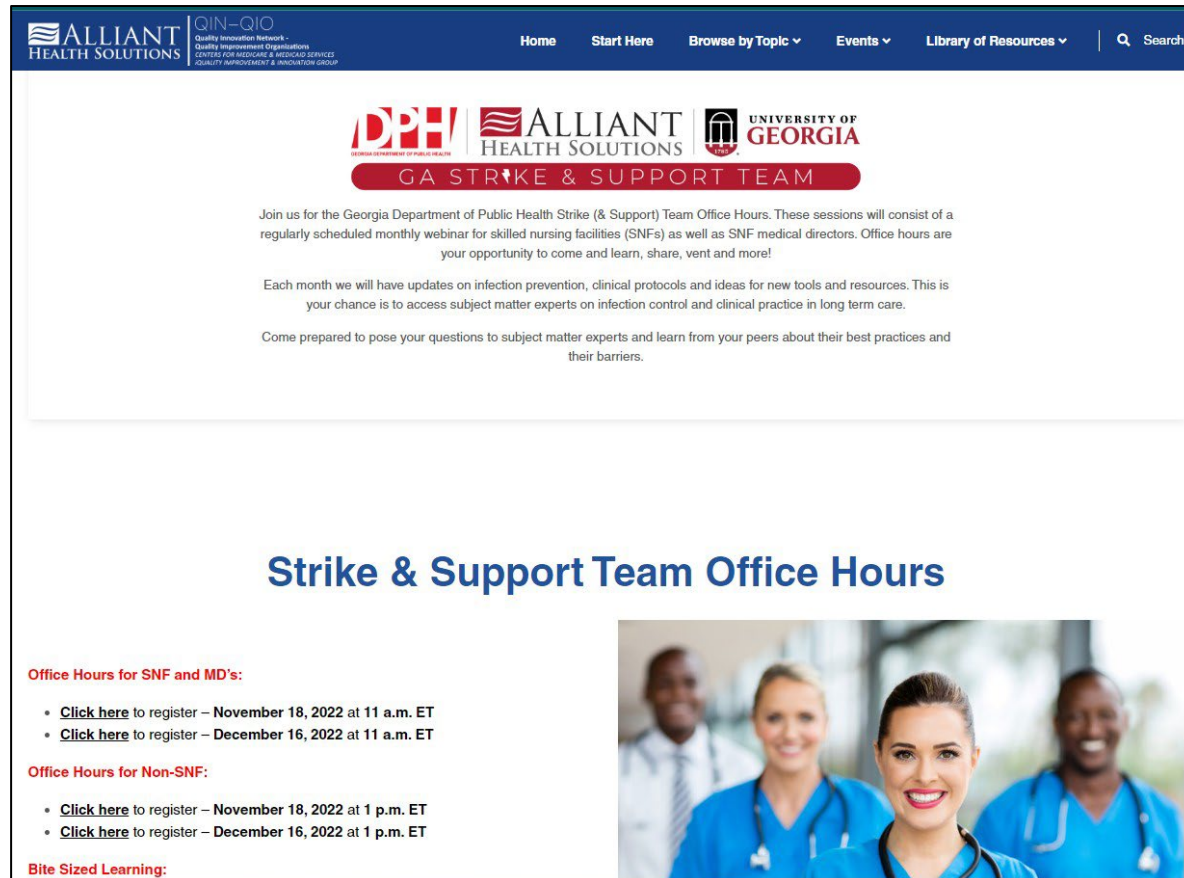
- [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#)
- [CDC Handwashing: A Healthy Habit in the Kitchen](#)
- [CDC Stay Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
- [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#)



Questions?



# Alliant Health Solutions Resources



**GA STRIKE & SUPPORT TEAM**

Join us for the Georgia Department of Public Health Strike (& Support) Team Office Hours. These sessions will consist of a regularly scheduled monthly webinar for skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) as well as SNF medical directors. Office hours are your opportunity to come and learn, share, vent and more!

Each month we will have updates on infection prevention, clinical protocols and ideas for new tools and resources. This is your chance to access subject matter experts on infection control and clinical practice in long term care.

Come prepared to pose your questions to subject matter experts and learn from your peers about their best practices and their barriers.

## Strike & Support Team Office Hours


**Office Hours for SNF and MD's:**

- [Click here](#) to register – November 18, 2022 at 11 a.m. ET
- [Click here](#) to register – December 16, 2022 at 11 a.m. ET

**Office Hours for Non-SNF:**

- [Click here](#) to register – November 18, 2022 at 1 p.m. ET
- [Click here](#) to register – December 16, 2022 at 1 p.m. ET

**Bite Sized Learning:**




## Infection Control Resources

### Sepsis

- [HQIC Sepsis Gap Assessment and Action Steps](#)
- [HQIC Sepsis: Spot the Signs Magnet](#)
- [HQIC Sepsis Provider Engagement](#)
- [AQ Sepsis-ZoneTool](#)
- [Recognition and Management of Severe Sepsis and Septic Shock](#)

[SHOW MORE](#)

### Catheter Associated Urinary Tract Infection (CAUTI)

- [CAUTI Gap Assessment Tool](#)
- [Urinary Catheter Quick Observation Tool](#)
- [CDC-HICPAC Guideline for Prevention of CAUTI 2009](#)
- [AHRQ Toolkit for Reducing CAUTI in Hospitals](#)
- [CDC TAP CAUTI Implementation Guide](#)

[SHOW MORE](#)

### Hand Hygiene

- [Handwash the FROG Way – Badges – English](#)
- [Handwash the FROG Way – Badges – Spanish](#)
- [Handwash the FROG Way – Poster – English](#)
- [Handwash the FROG Way – Poster – Spanish](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions – Alcohol Based Hand Rub](#)

[SHOW MORE](#)

### NHSN

- [Joining the Alliant Health Solutions NHSN Group](#)
- [Instructions for Submitting C. difficile Data into NHSN](#)
- [5-Step Enrollment for Long-term Care Facilities](#)
- [CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network \(NHSN\)](#)
- [NHSN Enrollment/ LAN Event Presentation](#)

### Clostridioides Difficile Infection (C. difficile)

- [C. difficile Training](#)
- [Nursing Home Training Sessions Introduction](#)
- [Nursing Home C. difficile Infection](#)

### Antibiotic Stewardship

- [Antibiotic Stewardship Basics](#)
- [A Field Guide to Antibiotic Stewardship in Outpatient Settings](#)
- [Physician Commitment Letter](#)
- [Be Antibiotics Aware](#)
- [Taking Your Antibiotics](#)

[SHOW MORE](#)

### Training

- [Options for Infection Control Training in Nursing Homes Flyer](#)

### COVID-19

- [Invest in Trust \(AHRQ Resource for CNA COVID-19 Vaccines\)](#)
- [Nursing Home Staff and Visitor Screening Toolkit – PDF](#)
- [Nursing Home Staff and Visitor Screening Toolkit – Excel](#)

<https://quality.allianthealth.org/topic/georgia-department-of-public-health/>

<https://quality.allianthealth.org/topic/infection-control/>

Thank You for Your Time!  
Contact the AHS Patient Safety Team  
[Patientsafety@allianthealth.org](mailto:Patientsafety@allianthealth.org)



Amy Ward, MS, BSN, RN, CIC  
Patient Safety Manager  
[Amy.Ward@AlliantHealth.org](mailto:Amy.Ward@AlliantHealth.org)  
678.527.3653



Paula St. Hill, MPH, A-IPC  
Technical Advisor, Infection Prevention  
[Paula.StHill@AlliantHealth.org](mailto:Paula.StHill@AlliantHealth.org)  
678.527.3619



Donald Chitanda, MPH, CIC  
Technical Advisor, Infection Prevention  
[Donald.Chitanda@AlliantHealth.org](mailto:Donald.Chitanda@AlliantHealth.org)  
678.527.3651



Erica Umeakunne, MSN, MPH, APRN, CIC  
Infection Prevention Specialist  
[Erica.Umeakunne@AlliantHealth.org](mailto:Erica.Umeakunne@AlliantHealth.org)

# Thank you!

## Consult with the DPH Team! We are here to help!

State Region/Districts	Contact Information
<b>North (Rome, Dalton, Gainesville, Athens)</b> Districts 1-1, 1-2, 2, 10	<u><a href="mailto:Sue.bunnell@dph.ga.gov">Sue.bunnell@dph.ga.gov</a></u> (404-967-0582)
<b>Atlanta Metro (Cobb-Douglas, Fulton, Clayton, Lawrenceville, DeKalb, LaGrange)</b> Districts 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, 3-4, 3-5, 4	<u><a href="mailto:Teresa.Fox@dph.ga.gov">Teresa.Fox@dph.ga.gov</a></u> (256-293-9994) <u><a href="mailto:Renee.Miller@dph.ga.gov">Renee.Miller@dph.ga.gov</a></u> (678-357-4797)
<b>Central (Dublin, Macon, Augusta, &amp; Columbus)</b> Districts 5-1, 5-2, 6, 7	<u><a href="mailto:Theresa.Metro-Lewis@dph.ga.gov">Theresa.Metro-Lewis@dph.ga.gov</a></u> (404-967-0589) <u><a href="mailto:Karen.Williams13@dph.ga.gov">Karen.Williams13@dph.ga.gov</a></u> (404-596-1732)
<b>Southwest (Albany, Valdosta)</b> Districts 8-1, 8-2	<u><a href="mailto:Connie.Stanfill1@dph.ga.gov">Connie.Stanfill1@dph.ga.gov</a></u> (404-596-1940)
<b>Southeast (Savannah, Waycross)</b> Districts 9-1, 9-2	<u><a href="mailto:Lynn.Reynolds@dph.ga.gov">Lynn.Reynolds@dph.ga.gov</a></u> (804-514-8756)
<b>Backup/Nights/Weekends</b>	<u><a href="mailto:Joanna.Wagner@dph.ga.gov">Joanna.Wagner@dph.ga.gov</a></u> (404-430-6316)

# Save the Date

## **SNF and Medical Directors Office Hours:**

November 17, 2023 | 11 a.m. ET

## **ALF and PCH Office Hours:**

November 17, 2023 | 1 p.m. ET



# Thanks Again...

- Georgia Department of Public Health
- University of Georgia



**UNIVERSITY OF  
GEORGIA**

# Making Health Care Better



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This material was prepared by Alliant Health Solutions, under contract with the Georgia Department of Public Health as made possible through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. GA DPH--4711-10/20/23

[quality.allianthealth.org](https://quality.allianthealth.org)