ACHA COVID-19 Update: January 27, 2021

These updates have been provided by ACHA's COVID-19 Task Force. Please forward this message to others on campus who may benefit. Non-members can subscribe to receive these and other messages here. We will continue to update the COVID-19 webpage with important alerts and resources.

ACHA Updates

Behavioral Change Approaches to Reduce the Spread of SARS-CoV-2

ACHA, in partnership with CDC, developed a document to provide examples of behavioral change approaches implemented by colleges and universities to promote everyday strategies that reduce the spread of SARS-CoV-2.

ACHA is working to turn the existing document into a searchable online directory and is asking for IHEs to submit their programs and policies for inclusion in the directory. Tell us about the approaches that your campus has been successful in using to reduce transmission by filling out this form.

Shots and Swabs: College and Covid in 2021

Friday, January 29 at 2:00 p.m. ET

The Chronicle of Higher Education is hosting "Shots and Swabs: College and Covid in 2021," a virtual event that brings together a panel of experts to examine how colleges will adhere to—or alter—their testing and safety measures as vaccines continue to roll out. ACHA COVID-19 Task Force Co-Chair Gerri Taylor is a featured panelist for this event.

Data, Numbers, and Epidemiology

IHME COVID-19 Results Briefing

This document contains summary information on the latest projections from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) model on COVID-19 in the United States of America. The model was run on January 21, 2021, with data through January 19, 2021. The summary includes information and data on the current situation, trends in drivers of transmission, and projections.

Proportion of Asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 Infections

This Annals of Internal Medicine article reviews 61 studies involving SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid or antibody testing of a target population regardless of current symptomatic status over a defined period. Of the studies, 18 were antibody testing studies and 43 involved RT-PCR testing. From their review, the authors inferred:

- The asymptomatic fraction of SARS-CoV-2 infection is sizable, with available data suggesting at least one-third of infections are asymptomatic.
- Longitudinal studies suggest nearly 75% of individuals receiving a positive PCR test but who have no symptoms at the time of testing will remain asymptomatic.

Recommendations:

- COVID-19 control strategies must be altered taking into account the prevalence and transmission risk of asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infection. Viable options include frequent, inexpensive, rapid home tests to identify and contain presymptomatic or asymptomatic cases and government programs that provide financial assistance and, if necessary, housing to enable infected persons to isolate themselves.
- More research will be needed to determine the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines in preventing asymptomatic infection.

SARS-CoV-2 Transmission Associated with High School Wrestling Tournaments

This CDC MMWR describes the COVID-19 outbreak in a Florida county after two high school wrestling tournaments took place with 10 participating high school teams from three counties. The tournament took place December 4-5, 2020, and a total of 130 wrestlers, coaches, and referees were in attendance. On December 8-9, 13 wrestlers from school A (the host school) tested positive for SARS-CoV-2. Of the 130 tournament attendees, 54 (41.5%) were tested and 38 cases identified. Public health investigators identified 446 close contacts of the 38 positive patients (62 household contacts and 384 school contacts). Ninety-five of the contacts were tested with 41 (43.2%) testing positive. As a result of this outbreak, an estimated 1,700 in-person school days were lost due to isolation and quarantine and all winter indoor and outdoor high school athletics in county A were suspended, affecting approximately 1,500 students. The 14-day incidence in county A, home to 7 of the 10 participating high school teams at the time of the tournament, was 363 cases per 100,000 persons.

Conclusions and recommendations:

- The incidence in county A placed the community in the highest category for transmission of SARS-CoV-2. CDC guidance regarding community transmission level thresholds for school decision-makers should also be applied to school athletics and related social gatherings.
- High-contact school athletic activities for which mask wearing and physical distancing are not possible should be postponed during periods with substantial or high levels of SARS-CoV-2 community transmission. Of note, face masks pose a choking hazard if worn during wrestling and thus, are not recommended.
- Outbreaks among athletes participating in high contact sports can impact in-person learning for all students and increase risk for secondary in-school and community transmission with potentially severe outcomes, including death.

Prevention and Treatment

Effect of Bamlanivimab as Monotherapy or in Combination with Etesevimab on Viral Load in Patients with Mild to Moderate COVID-19

This study published in JAMA was funded by Eli Lilly, (maker of bamlanivimab and etesevimab) and was a phase 2/3 trial randomizing 613 outpatients with mild to moderate COVID-19 symptoms to receive an infusion of bamlanivimab monotherapy (at three different doses: 700 mg, 2,800 mg, or 7,000 mg), the combination therapy of 2,800 mg of bamlanivmab and 2,800 mg of etesevimab, or a placebo. Compared to the placebo group, only the combination therapy significantly reduced viral load from baseline to day 11. The authors state "additional study is needed to understand whether the greater reduction of viral load shown by combination therapy would eventually translate to clinical benefit compared with monotherapy."

Testing and Tracking/Tracing

COVID Tests are Complicated. A Guide to Understanding Types and Trade-Offs

This short (less than 3 minutes) video explains the difference between antigen and molecular tests. The video is targeted to patients and the lay public.

Vaccines

Vaccinate with Confidence: CDC's Strategy to Reinforce Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccines

This CDC webpage defines strategies and action steps for building confidence in COVID-19 vaccines, including confidence in the vaccine itself, the providers who administer the vaccines, and the processes and policies that led to its development, licensure, and authorization. CDC offers "Six Ways to Help Build COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence" and three strategies with action steps to **reinforce** confidence in COVID-19 vaccines: 1) build trust, 2) empower health care personnel, and 3) engage communities and individuals.

Vaccination Communication Toolkit for Essential Workers

CDC has designed a COVID-19 Vaccination Communication Toolkit for Essential Workers to help employers build confidence in this important new vaccine. The toolkit will help employers across various industries educate their workforce about COVID-19 vaccines, raise awareness about the benefits of vaccination, and address common questions and concerns. Partners are encouraged to adapt the key messages to the language, tone, and format that will resonate with the organizations and industries they serve.

Vaccine Acceptance

CDC's Science Update from last week includes two articles on vaccine attitudes and intention to vaccinate. Both studies show increased vaccine hesitancy was more frequent among non-Hispanic Black or Hispanic persons. Credible information about vaccine safety and effectiveness might improve uptake. Also noted is that later surveys suggest that COVID-19 vaccine acceptance among vulnerable populations might have increased with news reports on effective vaccines. Reducing vaccine hesitancy will require a multifaceted approach, including trustworthy information, effective communication, and trusted messengers, potentially including community leaders, clinicians, and social media influencers.

Learning from Errors with the New COVID-19 Vaccines

This Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) article describes numerous voluntary reports of COVID-19 vaccine errors or hazards. Issues were categorized into dilution errors, vaccine and monoclonal antibody mix ups, vaccine contamination and concerns about unnecessary vaccine waste, administration to the wrong age group, second dose scheduling error, and allergic reactions. In the article, ISMP provides recommendations to improve safety of vaccine administration and reduce/prevent vaccination errors.

College Campuses

Biden Orders Up More COVID Guidance for Colleges

This Inside Higher Ed article describes President Biden's strategy for addressing the pandemic. The article discusses Biden's recent executive order titled "Executive Order on Supporting the Reopening and Continuing Operation of Schools and Early Childhood Education Providers" directing the Secretary of Education (in consultation with the Secretary of HHS) to provide, among other things, "evidence-based guidance to institutions of higher education on safely reopening for in-person learning, which shall take into

account considerations such as the institution's setting, resources, and the population it serves." The article also quotes ACHA Task Force Co-chair Gerri Taylor on the new administration and the long-awaited attention to the needs of our IHEs and our students.

How UC San Diego Stifled a COVID Spike

This University Business article describes the University of California, San Diego's (UCSD) success in managing a surge of COVID-19 cases as students returned to campus after their winter break. Upon return to UCSD, 94 students tested positive, but as of last week that number is back to pre-winter break levels of under 1% with only 5 positive cases. Over 8,700 graduate and undergraduate students live on campus. In the surrounding San Diego County, the positive rate has averaged 12%. UCSD took the following action which led to their success in reducing cases:

- Increased testing from bi-weekly to weekly
- Installed vending machines throughout campus that distributed up to 2,000 test kits/day
- Streamlined contact tracing efforts to move students into isolation housing within 24 hours of testing positive or exposure
- Expansion of wastewater detection program from 76 sites to 200

Mental Health

Mental Health, Substance Use, and Wellbeing in Higher Education: Supporting the Whole Student Consensus Report

On January 13, 2021, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine released the consensus report Mental Health, Substance Use, and Wellbeing in Higher Education: Supporting the Whole Student. The report includes the most current research and reviews how institutions of higher education, including community colleges, provide treatment and support for the mental health and wellbeing of undergraduate and graduate students in all fields of study.

Members of the Committee on Supporting the Whole Student: Mental Health, Substance Use, and Wellbeing in Higher Education and National Academies Staff led a discussion on the report on the day it was released. Slides and a recording are available here.

See all updates here: https://www.acha.org/ACHA/Resources/Topics/COVID-19_Update.aspx

ACHA COVID-19 Page: https://www.acha.org/COVID-19

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