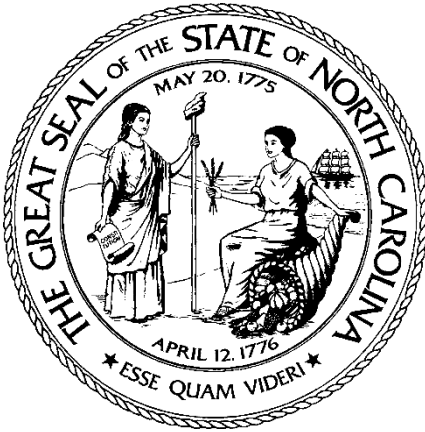


**JOINT LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**



COVID-19 Update

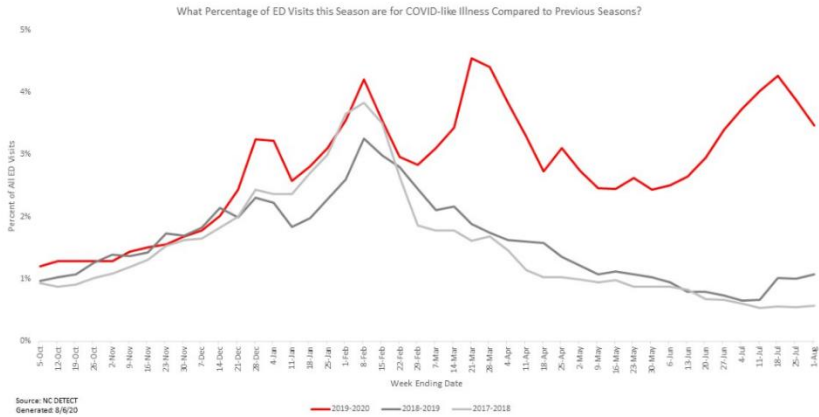
Mandy Cohen, MD, MPH
Department of Health and Human Services

August 11, 2020

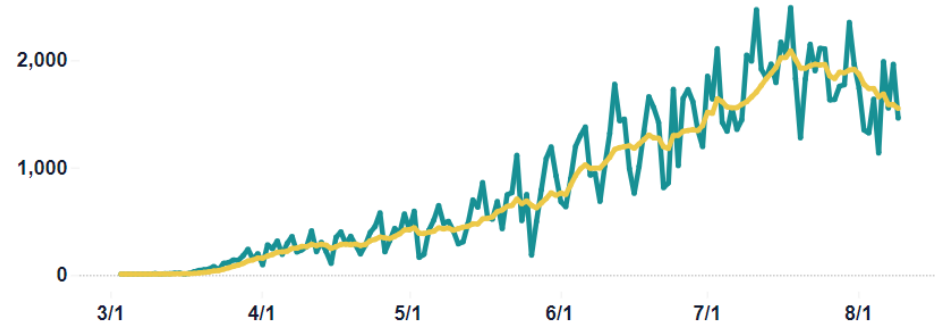
NC's Early Action to Fight COVID-19

- **North Carolina took early and aggressive action to slow the spread of the virus, manage shortages of testing and PPE supplies, develop hospital surge plans, and build testing and contact tracing capabilities.**
- **Our collective actions prevented our health care systems from being overwhelmed and provided valuable time to build our state's capacity to respond to the crisis.**
- **Our evidence-based and data-driven decision making has kept us from boiling over like many of our neighbors.**

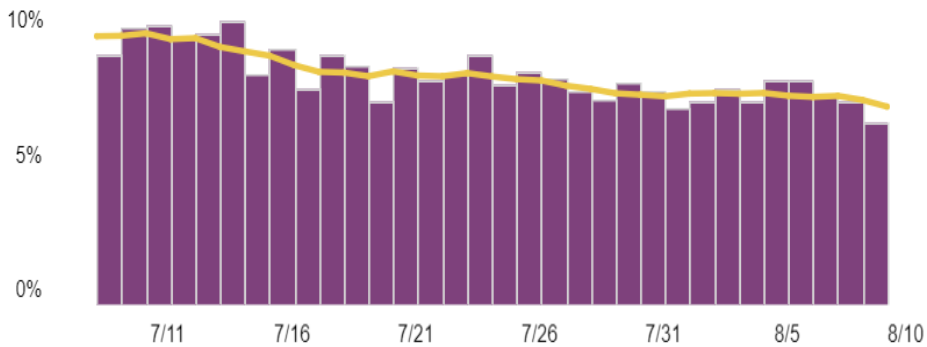
COVID-like Syndromic Cases



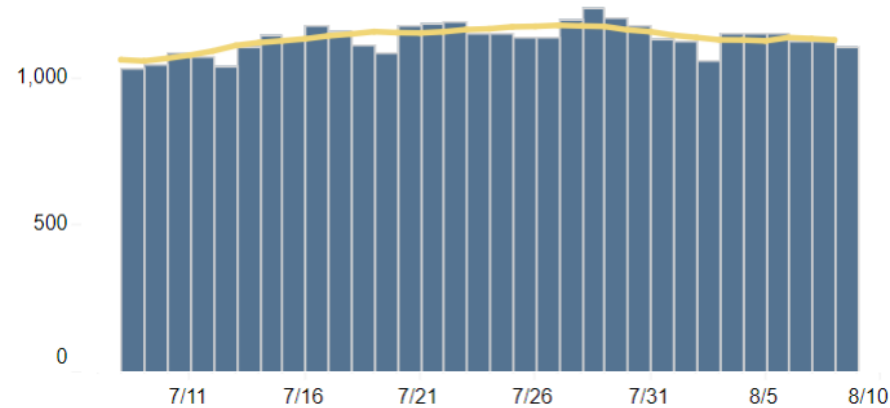
Trajectory of Cases



Percentage of Tests that are Positive



Hospitalizations



Data reflected through 8/9/20

Simmering, But Not Boiling Over

New Confirmed COVID-19 Cases per Day by US States/Territories, normalized by population



Note: Chart reflects North Carolina in comparison to other Southern states

NC's Strategies to Slow the Spread of the Virus

	WHAT THE STATE IS DOING	WHAT THE PUBLIC CAN DO
Slow the Spread Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phased reopening of sectors/activities to minimize spread of COVID-19 • Require <u>face coverings</u> when physical distancing of 6 feet is not possible • Promote the 3Ws (<u>Wear, Wait, Wash</u>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Practice the 3Ws</u> and encourage family and friends to do the same • Employers should follow <u>NCDHHS guidance</u> for specific settings
Know Who Has COVID-19 and Who Has Been Exposed Testing and Tracing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a statewide <u>testing & contact tracing</u> infrastructure • Surge resources in hardest hit communities & populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get <u>tested</u> if <u>symptomatic</u> or if you think you are exposed to COVID-19 • Answer the call from the <u>contact tracing</u> team
Support People to Stay Home Isolation and Quarantine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure access to <u>non-congregate shelters</u> for people who need to isolate • Enact policies to enable people to miss work and stay at home, leverage <u>NCCARE360</u> to connect to supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay home when you can, especially when sick • Support employees to stay home when sick to minimize the spread of COVID-19

Prevention Strategies

“Dimmer Switch” Approach

- Responsibly ease restrictions beginning with lower risk activities, while closely monitoring the spread of the virus across our state.

3 Key Prevention Strategies

- Promote public messaging
- Provide personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Issue guidance and provide support

Prevention: Promote Messages

- Simple, actionable, memorable message
- Comprehensive toolkit online that includes PSAs, videos, social media images, flyers, posters and more
- Organizations and businesses across the state are promoting the 3Ws.



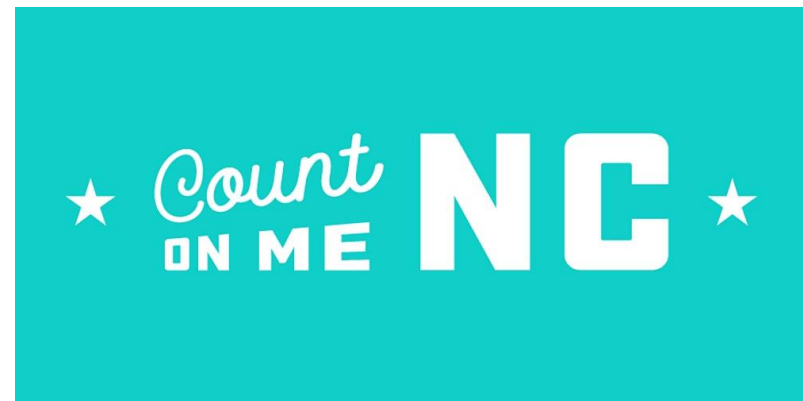
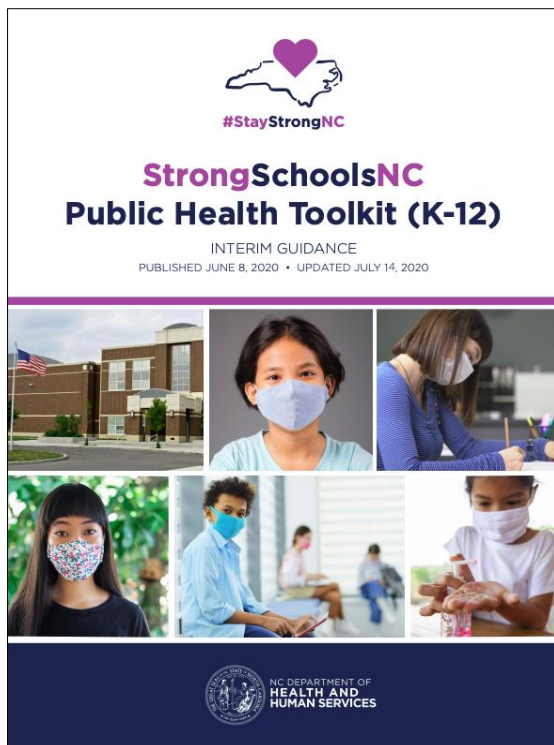
Prevention: Provide PPE

- Distributed 3.5 million cloth masks, 4.5 million procedure masks and additional PPE supplies across the state

Setting	Supplies	Impact
Long-term Care Facilities	1.5 million procedure masks 6.7 million gloves 649,000 face shields 607,000 shoe covers	2,684 facilities across 59 counties
Farms and Meat Packing Plants	303,000 cloth masks 724,000 procedure masks 87,600 hand sanitizer 4800 face shields	43K agriculture workers in 31 counties 20 meat packing plants
Schools	1.7 million cloth masks 347,000 procedure masks 8,000 face shields 81,000 gowns 16,000 thermometers	Teachers, students, staff, and nurses in 322 schools
Child Care	14,800 touchless thermometers with batteries 28,000 cases of bleach 25,000 disposable surgical masks 64,000 reusable cloth face coverings (about 10/staff) 28,000 cartons of paper towels 20,000 cases of disinfectant wipes 4,900 cases of hand sanitizer (approximate amounts)	4,210 childcare facilities
State/Local/County Government, Courts	699,000 cloth masks 951,000 procedure masks 7,000 hand sanitizer 185,000 gloves 530 gowns	State employees, County DSS, Courts, and visitors
Community-Based Organizations	129,000 cloth masks 23,000 procedure masks	18 organizations who are doing outreach or providing services primarily to Historically Marginalized Populations (HMP)

Prevention: Issue Guidance & Provide Support

- Support enforcement of existing policies through education and ongoing development of guidance for businesses, schools, community organizations, and individuals.



Testing and Tracing:

- CDC and US HHS gave NC's testing strategy high marks
- ~30K daily tests completed on average daily
- Turnaround times for results have improved (~3 day av)
- State funded testing focused on: uninsured, nursing home staff, historically marginalized and underserved communities, urban population centers
- RFQ process to select testing vendors – rolling selection

- Over 1,800 staff supporting contact tracing
 - 647 contact tracing surge staff have been hired through Community Care of NC (CCNC) to support counties

Testing and Tracing

- Testing and contacts tracing has been a key strategy to slow the spread of the virus.

Testing Type	Description	How it's collected	Who should get the test	Reliability	Typical turnaround time
Molecular tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looks for the presence of RNA of the virus • Virus can take a few days to be detectable after exposure but can be present even without symptoms 	NP swab, Nasal swab, Oral swab, Saliva	Symptomatic individuals, Asymptomatic individuals who are close contacts	Most reliable – gold standard for identifying SARS-CoV-2	Needs to be sent to a lab Results back in a few days: turnaround times based on volume and lab processing capacity
Antigen tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works like a rapid flu test and detects structures on the surface of the virus. • Compared to other rapid tests easier to run, fewer biosafety issues, potentially read with the naked eye 	NP swab, Nasal swab	Symptomatic individuals, Symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals in high risk settings where active cases have been confirmed	Good at telling if someone has virus, especially in first 5 days of symptoms. May miss some cases (risk of false negatives)	Approx. 15 minutes Simpler design allows for faster turnaround time and more rapid scaling at a lower cost than molecular tests
Antibody / Serology tests	Looks for antibodies, detectable weeks to months after infection	Blood Draw, Finger Stick	People thought to be previously exposed, Population surveillance	Determines past infection, but unclear how long immunity lasts	Takes a few days for results to come back

Isolation and Quarantine Supports

Ensuring families have access to food

- Provided critical food benefits to the families of nearly 900K children who receive free and reduced lunch since schools closed in March due to COVID-19.

Providing safe places for people to isolate

- Secured FEMA waiver to provide housing alternatives such as hotels, motels and dormitories, as well as essential wraparound services, for North Carolinians with unstable housing who need to quarantine, isolate or social distance due to COVID-19.
- Leveraging our Back@Home model to support statewide implementation of best practices for Housing Stability activities with first allocation of ESG-CV funds from the CARES Act to support Crisis Response activities.

Isolation and Quarantine Supports

Connecting people to support services:

- Partnering with community-based organizations to deploy up to 250 Community Health Workers to historically underserved areas with high COVID-19 caseloads to connect North Carolinians with needed services and support.
- Launching an innovative new program to support individuals in targeted counties who need supports like food and transportation to successfully quarantine or isolate due to COVID-19.
- Leveraging our statewide technology platform, NCCARE360, to help coordinate whole-person care such as food, housing, transportation, employment and interpersonal safety to support people who need to isolate or quarantine.

Intentional focus on those most impacted

- **Hispanic/Latinx and African American/Black communities are being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19**
- **Free testing in ZIP codes with historically marginalized populations & limited testing access:**
 - **Over 9,000 tests at over 210 sites (as of 8/9)**
- **Awarded \$100k grants to 5 local organizations to help support disease prevention measures in high-risk Hispanic/LatinX communities**
- **RFA issued for African-American community organization partnerships**
- **52% of contact tracers hired to date are bilingual**

Protecting Long-Term Care Residents

- Early and aggressive action helped slow the spread of the virus in long-term care.
- The state has provided extensive support to long-term care facilities focused on a **5-point strategy**:
 - 1. Prevention**
 - 2. Staffing**
 - 3. Testing**
 - 4. Outbreak Management**
 - 5. Oversight**

As a result:

- Fewer people become sick when there is an outbreak.
- Outbreaks are shorter.

Nursing Home Actions

1. Prevention:

- Sent every nursing home in the state a two-week supply of PPE
- Increased trainings
- Employee screenings daily
- Mask requirement for staff
- No visitors (except compassionate care) or group activities

2. Staffing:

- Helping to fill staffing shortage
- Funding to keep and train staff
- Reciprocity for out-of-state nurse aides

3. Testing:

- Testing all nursing home residents and staff: more than 49,000
- Testing for all residents and staff when one person tests positive
- Staff testing every other week, weekly if case is detected

Nursing Home Actions

4. Outbreak management:

- Required weekly testing of all staff and residents if outbreak
- Required reporting of new COVID case to Local Health Department within 24 hours
- Technical assistance throughout outbreak

5. Oversight:

- Inspected all 428 CMS certified nursing homes: completed one month ahead of schedule
- Follow-up infection control inspection if nursing home has first resident case

Looking Ahead

- The progress we've made so far is fragile.
- Continued need to amplify consistent messaging across communities.
- Federal action needed to address unstable testing supply chains; diversify testing modalities.
- Medicaid expansion is needed to help respond to and recover from this crisis.
- Continued focus on historically marginalized populations.
- Plan for vaccination campaign and distribution in 2021.