



Knox County Health Department

140 Dameron Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37917

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 14, 2021

Contact: Kaylee Coffman
865-215-5722 office
865-507-9797 cell

KCHD's Service Spotlight: Epidemiology Team

Knoxville, Tenn.— A major part of understanding health-related events is monitoring infectious diseases to limit transmission. That's where the KCHD Epidemiology team comes in. There are 54 reportable diseases that are required by law to be reported to public health authorities. Some of those include measles, Lyme disease, tetanus, rabies and most recently, COVID-19. For all reportable diseases, KCHD's epidemiology team interviews each case to determine likely sources and risk factors for contracting the disease, to ensure the patient receives adequate treatment and education about preventing transmission.

"This system has been used to help all of our outbreak responses by identifying at-risk populations," said Roberta Sturm, director of communicable and environmental disease and emergency preparedness. "The most important component of my work is protecting the community and providing, analyzing and collecting information to reduce the spread of disease."

If you have tested positive for a reportable disease, you will be speaking to a contact tracer. It's vital that you provide all the information you can to assist with contact tracing as that will limit the spread of disease to those around you.

Additionally, the continual gathering of data through surveillance, investigations and surveys allows the EPI Program to produce a variety of reports that help inform the community about the state of health in Knox County. One such report, [KCHD's Community Health Assessment](#), serves as the basis for outlining priority health issues in Knox County and is used by a variety of groups, including medical providers, nonprofit organizations, and hospitals to inform their work.

Other EPI reports and data can be reviewed online at <https://www.knoxcounty.org/health/epidemiology>.

About Knox County Health Department

The first health department in Tennessee to achieve national voluntary accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is dedicated to ensuring the conditions in which every resident can be healthy. As a chief health strategist for the community and with more than 240 team members, KCHD's broad scope of work includes convening partners to improve community health, identifying community health threats, investigating disease outbreaks, conducting extensive outreach and education, preparing for public health emergencies, providing and connecting the public with medical care, enforcing food safety and air quality laws, and more. For more information, visit www.knoxcounty.org/health.

###

