

Despite large segments of the US population behaving as if Covid-19 is no longer a risk, 25,000 Americans have died from Covid since the start of 2023.

Many of you have heard that the federal government is ending its declaration of a national public health emergency on May 11, 2023 – only 2 months away. States will be given more control over what they decide to cover/not cover, health precautions, health statistics gathering and reporting, etc. Implications of the federal end of the emergency health declaration for you and your communities will most likely include:

- Access to COVID-19 vaccinations and certain treatments, such as Paxlovid and Lagevrio, may or may not be affected for each of you and your loved ones. Whether these vaccinations and treatments will be available cost-free after May 2023 is dependent on funding from Congress and the States.
- Coverage for COVID-19 testing for Americans will change. The requirement for private insurance companies to cover COVID-19 tests without cost sharing, both for over the counter and laboratory tests, will end. However, coverage may continue if insurance plans choose to continue to include it.
- Data reporting to the federal government will change.

- The ability of health care providers to safely dispense controlled substances via telemedicine without an in-person interaction will be affected. However, the Biden administration intends to propose federal rulemaking to extend these flexibilities.

Two things you need to do now to protect yourself and your family:

- Get your booster shots and test kits while they are still FREE before May. Talk to your health care providers about how you will be affected by the federal and state changes.
- Start your personal Covid-19 plan. Check out the personal plan suggested by the CDC which is [available in English](#) and which is [available in Spanish](#).
- Talk with your healthcare provider about whether you are at high risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. If you don't have a healthcare provider there are options for getting advice/treatment
- Understand your risk
- Have a supply of COVID-19 self-test kits at home and know when and how to use them.
- Have a plan to contact a healthcare provider right away if you test positive. Don't delay. Treatment must be started

within days after you first develop symptoms to be effective.

- Take precautions despite loosening of restrictions and "ending" of the emergency declaration -- for the good of our communities:
 - vaccination boosters
 - high quality masks when in enclosed spaces
 - ventilation
 - handwashing, sanitation

An annual booster is expected to come in the Fall.

Our Presbytery Covid group will update information as it becomes available. Please continue to read the information we will send out via the Presbytery newsletter.