

Faith Leader Webinar Follow up: Case Investigation, Contact Tracing and Testing

Webinar hosted on 7/27/2020

Question

Answer

<p>What is Case Investigation?</p>	<p>People that have tested positive for COVID-19 are interviewed and this comprehensive interview is called a case investigation. Local public health departments are responsible for conducting COVID-19 case investigations. During the course of the case investigation interview, individuals will be asked about where they went and who they spent time with while they were infectious, as well socio-demographic information like race and ethnicity. Local public health departments also provide education and resources for people being asked to isolate at home. Information collected during a case investigation is confidential. A patient will ideally be interviewed by a case investigator who is fluent in their primary language; however, if the case investigator is not bilingual, they have access to phone translation services. You can find additional information on the OHA Contact Collaborative Website here: https://govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-Contact-Collaborative.</p>
<p>What is Contact Tracing?</p>	<p>Local health departments contact all people who are identified as a close contact of a COVID-19 case. The local health departments provide guidance, education, and support to close contacts so that they can safely quarantine during their incubation period. It's a key tool for preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. In Oregon, local public health authorities use contact tracing to prevent the spread of many types of diseases, like measles.</p> <p>Contact tracers will also ask you questions about race, ethnicity, language and disability in order to provide more equitable services to people who have been most affected by current and long-standing racism and oppression. You can see the types of questions you may be asked here.</p> <p>You can find additional information on the OHA Contact Collaborative Website here: https://govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-Contact-Collaborative.</p>
<p>Who will be conducting case investigations or contact tracing for members within our community?</p>	<p>This will most often be conducted by someone from the local public health department in your area. However, there may also be instances when case counts are high and the demand for contact tracing exceeds local capacity. In those instances,</p>

	<p>staff from the Oregon Health Authority or Community Based Organizations who have been trained by the Oregon Health Authority may also assist.</p>
<p>Can faith communities assist in case investigation or contact tracing for individuals and families within our congregation?</p>	<p>Case investigation requires extensive training and is completed by public health nurses, epidemiologists or those with extensive public health training.</p> <p>Contact tracing is most often handled by public health, but in situations of outbreaks or high numbers of positive tests, staff from Community Based Organizations may also conduct the calls. Currently there is not a way to direct specific cases to specific contact tracers.</p>
<p>What is the best way to identify if a call is from a case investigator or contact tracer?</p>	<p>If you are concerned about answering a call from a number you don't know and don't answer, the case investigator or contact tracer will leave a voicemail clearly identifying themselves and will request that you call back. The voicemail will not contain any health information.</p> <p>While case investigators and contact tracers may ask to verify your name and date of birth, they will <u>not</u> ask you for your social security number.</p> <p>If you suspect fraud, hang up the phone. Do not answer any other calls that come from that number. Report the activity and learn tips to avoid fraud by visiting the Federal Trade Commission online at www.consumer.ftc.gov. You can also learn about emerging scams and report the incident to the Oregon Department of Justice online at www.OregonConsumer.gov.</p>
<p>Is case investigation and contact tracing information kept confidential?</p>	<p>We want everyone to feel safe answering the call from a contact tracer. Your information is strictly confidential and will be treated as a confidential public health record. Your personal information (name, age, address, race/ethnicity, religious preferences, etc.) will not be shared with any other local, state or federal agency.</p>
<p>What happens if someone doesn't cooperate with case investigation or contact tracing?</p>	<p>Public health will make three attempts to call all cases and contacts. If the person does not answer the phone, a letter is sent to their residence and there is no additional outreach from the public health department. Sometimes, people only are willing to answer some of the questions in our case investigation. We collect as much information as the person is willing to provide and do not force anyone to provide information they are uncomfortable sharing.</p>
<p>Are the training manuals for contact tracers available to the public?</p>	<p>No—each county uses materials that they have specifically developed for their community. We also do not want our scripts available to the public to ensure that they are not available for use by scammers.</p>

<p>How far do you go back in time to identify close contacts once a case has been confirmed?</p>	<p>We ask all cases who have been in contact from the start of their infectious period to when the case is able to isolate. A person is presumed to be infectious in the 2 days before their symptom onset or 2 days before their first positive test for asymptomatic persons. For example, if a person was not able to isolate until 5 days after their onset, then the case investigator will ask about who they have come in contact with in the 2 days before their onset and in the 5 days after their onset.</p>
<p>Is someone who attends a faith gathering required to keep track of everyone they've been in contact with?</p>	<p>It's helpful for individuals to know anyone they may have been in contact with where there was less than 6 feet of distancing for more than 15 minutes. These types of interactions are considered to have a much higher risk of transmission and will be helpful in the event of a positive test where contact tracing needs to be completed.</p>
<p>If we all stay more than 6 feet apart at a gathering, does that mean no one would qualify as a close contact?</p>	<p>We consider someone a close contact if they are within 6 feet of a case for 15 minutes or longer. Those that are more than 6 feet away are not considered close contacts and would not be asked to self-quarantine.</p>
<p>If an individual from our congregation tests positive and recently attended a gathering, what happens next?</p>	<p>If an individual tests positive, but did not come within 6 feet of anyone else at the gathering, no additional action would be taken relating to the faith gathering unless other positive cases also indicate they were at the same gathering. If an individual tests positive and indicates that they had close contact with others (within 6 feet), the other individuals who were identified would receive a contact tracing call and will be asked to quarantine for 14 days.</p>
<p>When someone in a household tests positive, when is a quarantine considered over for the other members of the household that they live with?</p>	<p>Individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 should self-quarantine for 14 days since the <i>last</i> exposure. For some people, they will be unable to self-isolate in their homes and their household member's quarantine period does not begin until the case is out of isolation. For example, if a 2 year old child has COVID-19, they are not able to self-isolate because a parent needs to care for the child. The quarantine period for the parent who is taking care of the child does not begin until the child has completed their isolation period.</p>
<p>What happens to children if a parent or caregiver tests positive or needs to quarantine if they don't have a strong support system?</p>	<p>Local health departments may be able to provide wraparound services to support families that need additional support.</p>

<p>What is considered the infectious period before and after a positive diagnosis?</p>	<p>A symptomatic COVID-19 case is considered infectious from the 2 days before their symptom onset until they are out of isolation. Asymptomatic COVID-19 cases are considered infectious from the 2 days before their first positive test until they are out of isolation.</p> <p>Cases are isolated for a minimum of 10 days—they need to remain fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications for 24 hours, and other symptoms need to be improving.</p>
<p>Does law enforcement get involved with enforcing a quarantine?</p>	<p>We ask those who have been exposed to COVID-19 to self-quarantine and provide them resources so that they can safely self-quarantine. Quarantining is not mandatory and law enforcement will not get involved with enforcing quarantine.</p>
<p>What is the expectation of faith communities regarding contact tracing per state guidelines?</p>	<p>Faith communities located in counties approved for Phase 2 of reopening are expected to keep attendance records that contain contact information for individuals who attend services or gatherings. This information would only be shared with public health officials in the instance of an outbreak. These records can be destroyed 60 days after the event.</p> <p>Faith communities in Phase 1 counties are not required to keep attendance records.</p>
<p>How long should a faith community keep an attendee list?</p>	<p>Faith communities need to keep these records for 60 days following an event. They can be destroyed after 60 days.</p>
<p>What information should be included on the attendee list?</p>	<p>Information should include name, phone number, email address and physical address in addition to the date of the event.</p>
<p>If someone who attended a service reports to us that they have tested positive, does our church need to contact the County or does that automatically happen?</p>	<p>Positive tests are reported to Local Public Health Authorities. There is no need for a third party to report a positive test. If there are multiple people that have COVID-19 like symptoms, you can report the potential outbreak to the local health department.</p>
<p>What constitutes an outbreak related to a faith community? At what point will public officials ask a faith community for the names and contact info of faith gathering attendees?</p>	<p>An outbreak is defined as 2 or more persons who have tested positive or who are presumptive cases of COVID-19 who have some sort of link in space and time. If a faith community were to have at least two cases who attended a single gathering, then we would consider that to be an outbreak.</p> <p>Just because two people had a positive COVID test and are members of your community, doesn't immediately mean that would be considered an outbreak. They must have had an opportunity to be exposed to one another.</p>

	Information will only be requested from organizations if case investigation and contact tracing efforts do not produce enough information to adequately notify all exposed individuals.
If faith leaders aren't alerted that a member has tested positive, how are the ticketing/attendance lists that are required being used?	In rare instances, where there are large outbreaks and individuals indicate they have attended a gathering or event, your local public health authority may reach out to you to obtain the list of attendees of the service or event if there is concern that many people at the gathering were exposed to COVID-19.
When will faith communities be notified that someone who attended a gathering has tested positive?	Faith communities would be notified if an outbreak associated with a gathering is identified. Faith communities are notified because of the potential for more cases associated with the gathering.
If we are made aware that someone attended a gathering who has since tested positive, is it appropriate to alert everyone else who attended the gathering?	Alerting gathering attendees that there was a positive test is not a requirement for faith-based communities. However, it may be good to let the attendees know if any positive cases are identified and to educate attendees about the role of public health. This would help our case investigators and contact tracers conduct their work
If a faith community is identified as a potential hot spot, will the name of the faith community be released to the public?	OHA, in coordination with the local health department and the faith community, may release the name of the faith community if there is potential spread beyond the religious establishment. In addition, if a faith community has 30 or more employees and 5 or more cases among employees and their close contacts, the faith community's name would be included in our weekly workplace outbreak report.
Faith leaders may come into contact with a larger number of people than others. Is regular testing available for clergy?	We don't currently recommend that faith leaders be tested on a routine basis even though faith leaders may indeed come in contact with a larger number of people. We hope that leaders are using the appropriate protections as they conduct their various tasks of caring for congregants such as wearing a face covering and minding physical distancing. However, faith leaders are not considered to have high risk contact that would warrant routine testing such as that of healthcare workers who may be routinely exposed to individuals that have higher rates of COVID infection.
What kind of tests is Oregon using? How accurate are the tests?	Each laboratory decides what type of testing platform they wish to use so there are many different types of tests in Oregon. In order to be considered a case, you must have a positive diagnostic test from an FDA EUA approved testing platform. Diagnostic tests are quite accurate and do not have a lot of false positives.

<p>Why can't we have test results in hours rather than days?</p>	<p>The turnaround time between when a specimen is submitted to when a patient receives a result factors in the time it takes for the specimen to be shipped to the laboratory, for the time it takes the test to run (hours), and for the time it takes for the result to be sent back to the ordering provider. This can take 2-3 days. Some urgent care clinics have a rapid test that can provide results in 30 minutes, but not all clinics have this capability.</p>
<p>If our church hosts a testing event, will any positive tests from that event be assumed to be from our congregation?</p>	<p>Anyone who tests positive is interviewed by their local health department. During the case investigation, public health asks about any gatherings that the case may have attended. If 2 or more people from different households say that they went to the same gathering, then we will consider the gathering an outbreak. Local public health departments will work with the faith community to determine who may have been exposed during this gathering in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. During an outbreak investigation, public health will ask the faith community for a roster of people who attended the community.</p>