

MEMORANDUM

To: Rowan County Board of Health

From: Angela Worley, Communicable Disease Supervisor

Subject: Communicable Disease and Epidemiology Response Team Annual Report

Date: December 29, 2021

Epidemiology Response Team

Rowan County Health Department has an Epi team whose purpose is to identify, monitor, mitigate and respond to outbreaks or potential outbreaks of communicable diseases. The response team meets to discuss events that have occurred and to identify ongoing communicable disease risks in the community and interventions to prevent the spread of disease. The Epi Team meets at least annually and any time there is notice of a communicable disease threat. The team consists of the following members: Health Director, Communicable Disease Nurse, Preparedness Coordinator, Nursing Supervisor for Immunizations and Communicable Disease, Environmental Health, Laboratory Technician, Director of Nursing, Clinic Coordinator, and Management Support.

The Epi Team has focused primarily on the COVID-19 pandemic and COVID-19 cases again in 2021. We have shared COVID-19 information on a regular basis in the past year. We have had our Communicable Disease Nurse continue to focus on all other communicable diseases and to do the required investigations and reporting into the North Carolina Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NCEDSS). Because of the volume of work COVID-19 has added to communicable disease reporting, we have not maintained an in-house CD log. The information that is included in this annual report is taken from the NCEDSS.

Communicable Disease Updates

There have been no communicable disease outbreaks reported during 2021 besides the COVID-19 outbreaks.

Hepatitis A

We have discussed for the past several years a growing concern about a Hepatitis A outbreak spreading across the United States. This outbreak has been followed up, investigated, and reported since 2016. Cases associated with this outbreak began being recorded in North Carolina in May 2018. There has been a very large increase in cases from June 2020 until now. You have been provided a copy of a recent Situation Report from the Communicable Disease Branch with details about this outbreak and how it is impacting Rowan County. We would like to call the following to your attention from the memo:

- These Hepatitis A cases are being found in persons who use injectable or non-injectable drugs, persons who are homeless, and in men who have sex with men. There is a chart provided on page 2 of the memo which shows that 72% of the NC cases are in persons using drugs. While investigating cases for Rowan County, we find that an even larger majority of cases are in those persons using drugs. There have been a few cases associated with homelessness, and an occasional case in men having sex with men.
- Rowan County HD has reported a total of 72 cases of Hepatitis A in 2021.
- In the Rowan County cases, approximately 50% of the persons are infected with Hepatitis C also.
- If you look at the table for case information on page 3, you see that Rowan County ranks second in the state over the past six months for highest number of new cases. Caldwell

Co. is first with 12 cases, Rowan Co. is second with 11 cases, and Gaston Co. is third with 10 cases. Rowan County has also ranked second in the state in Hepatitis A cases throughout this year.

- The Hepatitis A cases are clustered in the western to central part of North Carolina.
- These cases are difficult to investigate due to inability to reach the persons in a timely manner and due to poor cooperation.
- The state has allowed use of state supplied Hepatitis A vaccines for persons in certain high risks groups for several years. The Rowan County Health Department offers and administers the Hepatitis A vaccine through the Immunization Clinic. We have request for state vaccine as well as private purchased vaccine for adults as well as children. We are looking at providing Hepatitis A vaccines again at the Rowan County Detention Center.

Tuberculosis

The chart below provides confirmed TB case numbers for calendar years 2018 through December 2021. We have had one new TB case in 2021 and this patient is currently receiving treatment by Direct Observation Therapy (DOT). This patient arrived in the US in the month prior to being seen by the CD Nurse and had a history of a positive CXR in immigration records. There are 2 contacts to the current case; one child and one adult. They both have had negative PPD's and will not receive preventive treatment. The CD Nurse has also completed therapy for last year's case.

Year	Cases	Number of contacts	Contacts evaluated	Candidate for treatment	Completed Treatment
2018	1	9	9	1	1
2019	3	15	15	7	3
2020	1	7	2	0	0
2021	1	2	2	0	0

HIV/STD:

A large percentage of the CD Nurse time is spent in STD follow up. The Health Department has to obtain proof of treatment for any positive STD test and report these into the state system. In addition, if a person who has tested positive has not been treated or has not been treated per NC STD guidelines, they are treated at the Health Department.

The following numbers of STD cases have been reported in 2021:

Chlamydia - 745

Gonorrhea - 347

Syphilis/all stages - 78

HIV - 0

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General Communicable Disease Report (number of cases in Rowan County):

Rowan County Health Department is responsible for reporting a total of 75 different communicable diseases. Below is a summary of those reported in 2021.

We have reviewed the Hepatitis A reporting. The cases of Hepatitis B and C have also increased as indicated below and are requiring much more time for follow up and reporting.

Most of the other communicable diseases have declined in number or remain about the same.

We did report one case of chickenpox in an adult who was hospitalized with pneumonia and tested positive for varicella at that time. He denied any known exposure and no travel history. He did not have a history of chickenpox prior to this illness.

	2018 (Jan-Sept)	2019 (Jan-Sept)	2020 (Jan-Sept)	2021 (Jan-Dec)
Pertussis	5	7	7	0
Hepatitis A	5	3	2	72
Hepatitis B- Acute	4	3	1	3
Hepatitis B (carrier or unknown)				27
Hepatitis C - Acute	10	8	3	4
Hepatitis C Chronic				412
Cryptosporidiosis	3	4	6	2
Cyclosporiasis	6	1	3	0
Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever	15	13	6	1
Lyme Disease	9	17	6	1
Shigellosis	5	10	7	2
Salmonellosis	23	24	27	15
Campylobacter Infection	12	41	20	22
Streptococcal infection Group A, Invasive	4	9	21	12
Legionellosis	2	3	1	4
Brucellosis	1	1	0	0
Hemoph. influenza	3	13	2	3
E Coli-Shiga Toxin	0	0	2	2
Meningitis, Pneumococcal	-	-	-	1
Vibrio	-	-	-	1
Chickenpox	-	-	-	1
Influenza Death	1	0	1	0