VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19 Disease Reporting Variance

March 14, 2025

What changed with the implementation of this variance?

Effective February 13, 2025, a variance was signed by Virginia's State Health Commissioner that changed the reporting requirements for COVID-19. Physicians, persons in charge of medical care facilities, and local health directors are no longer required to report suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 as outlined in 12VAC5-90-90(A, C, E) and 12VAC5-90-80(I).

Why are individual clinician reported cases of COVID-19 no longer being counted?

Individual case-based data are no longer representative of overall COVID-19 disease trends due to a number of factors. As COVID-19 became endemic, reporting of individual SARS-CoV-2 infections to public health became increasingly sporadic. This sporadic reporting was due to changes in testing patterns caused by the now widespread availability of **at-home testing**, a high proportion of **asymptomatic infections**, and, as more of the population has developed **immunity through vaccination and natural infection**, fewer people developed severe illness requiring them to seek testing and medical care.

When will these changes to disease reporting requirements become effective?

These changes went into effect on February 13, 2025.

How will COVID-19 trends be monitored now?

More passive data systems are now being used to monitor respiratory virus disease trends. These include surveillance methods to receive and monitor laboratory results positive for SARS-CoV-2 infection, and tracking aggregate reports of hospitalizations, emergency and urgent care visits, death data, and wastewater surveillance efforts.

What is still reportable to VDH regarding COVID-19 disease?

Positive SARS-CoV-2 test results should continue to be reported within three days by Directors of laboratories, including those labs that hold Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) Certificates of Waiver, as outlined in 12VAC5-90-80(J) and 12VAC5-90-90(B).

Suspected or confirmed COVID-19 outbreaks or clusters of cases should continue to be reported to the local health department immediately by all entities who are required to report in 12VAC5-90-90. This includes persons in charge of a residential or day program, service, or

facility licensed or operated by any agency of the Commonwealth, or a school, child care center, or summer camp. Learn more at the VDH Outbreak Reporting Requirements webpage.

I am a clinician in practice who holds a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendment (CLIA) Certificate of Waiver and do onsite COVID-19 testing. How do I report a positive SARS-CoV-2 test?

Methods of laboratory reporting include:

- Electronic reporting (see https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/meaningful-use/submissionofreportablelabresults/)
  - Point of Care Test Reporting is available via https://apps.vdh.virginia.gov/pocreporting/login/login.aspx
- By secure email to dsifax@vdh.virginia.gov
- By fax to (804) 864-8102 (VDH Office of Epidemiology)

I am a clinician in practice who holds a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendment (CLIA) Certificate of Waiver and do onsite SARS-CoV-2 testing. For a patient who has a positive COVID-19 test, what specific information about the patient needs to be reported?

Per 12VAC5-90-80, when a director of a laboratory (including entities that hold a CLIA Certificate of Waiver) reports a positive SARS-CoV-2 test, they need to include:

- the specimen type, laboratory method, and result;
- the name, telephone number, email address, address, age, date of birth, race, ethnicity, sex, and pregnancy status (if known) of the person from whom the specimen was obtained; and
- the name, address, and telephone number of the physician at whose request and medical facility at which the examination was made.

I am a clinician in practice. If a patient does an at-home SARS-CoV-2 test and brings me the actual positive test or takes a picture of it, do I need to report this to the health department?

No. You are only required to report positive SARS-COV-2 tests if you are a director of a laboratory or an entity that holds a CLIA Certificate of Waiver for such purpose. Please see above.