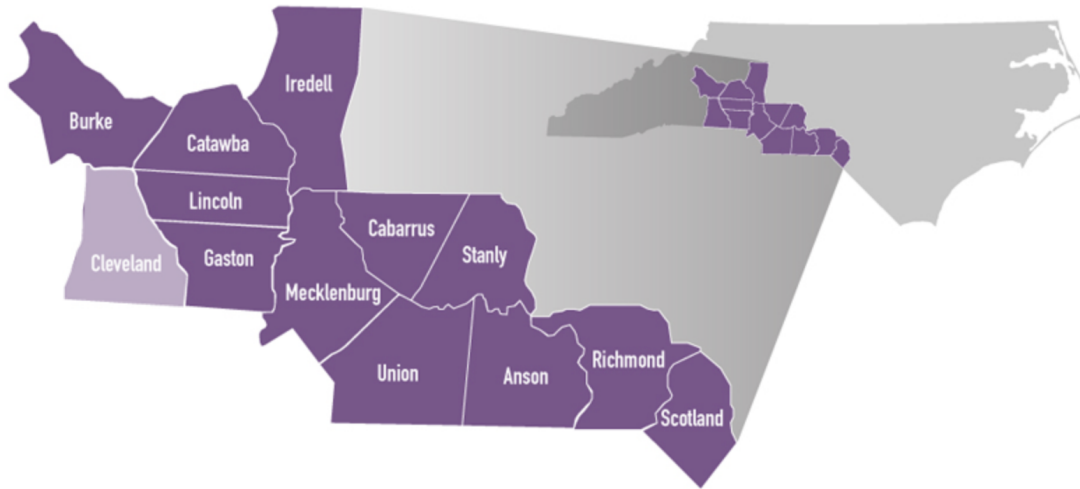


LONG TERM CARE NEWSLETTER

March, 2022

Volume 2 Issue 3



March 2022:

REGIONAL UPDATE & WELCOME

Welcome

WRITTEN BY RONALD HENSCHER, MPH

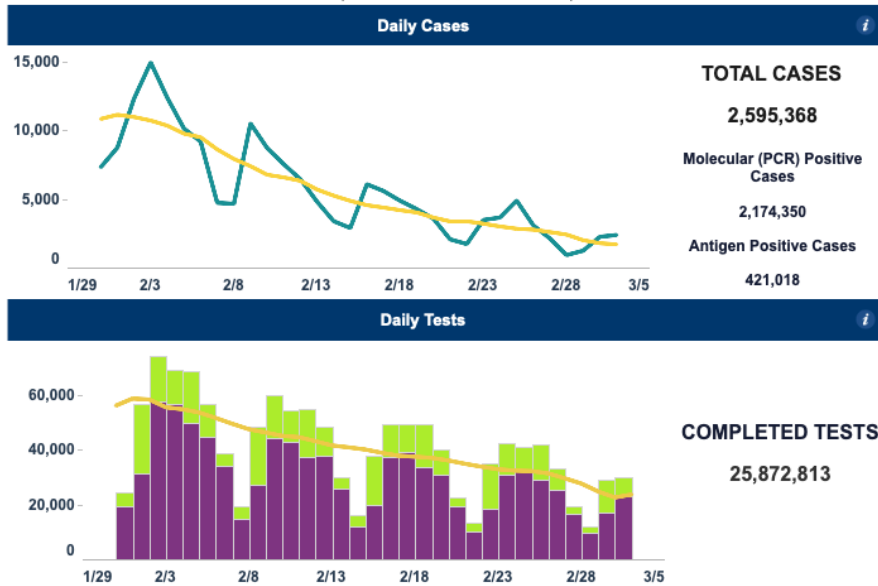
Welcome to the March 2022 issue of our newsletter. Over the first couple of months of 2022, we have seen more spikes in outbreaks, with omicron making its way through the world. Recently we have been witnessing the downside of those outbreaks. Many facilities are now only trying to end the long ongoing outbreaks with only a few positive cases. As we enter the spring of 2022, it will be essential to remember how fast things can reverse on us when it comes to COVID-19. Remember to stress PPE with your staff and, when possible, visitors so we can all enjoy a little springtime weather this year!

This month we will be exploring several topics ranging from severe weather month, some education, and the discussion of pandemics and endemics. As we approach the severe spring weather, it is once again time to make sure we are all ready for what is to come! March 8th is the sustainment and capstone for our emergency plan course. We hope to see many of you there, well, virtually at least! Lastly, we will be talking about pandemics to endemics. The terms are being used in the news lately. All hoping 2022 will be the year that COVID-19 becomes endemic, but what is that, and how does it differ?

State Dashboard Data

DATA COLLECTED FROM STATE DASHBOARD

Updated Monday - Friday by approximately 12:00 p.m.
Last updated March 3, 2022 at 12:15 p.m.



County	Cases 02/02/21	Deaths 02/02/21	Cases 03/03/2022	Deaths 03/03/2022	Active LTC Outbreaks 03/03/2022
Anson	6,142	88	6,484	96	2
Burke	22,590	267	24,629	299	5
Cabarrus	52,713	427	54,973	458	14
Catawba	44,564	502	47,241	554	6
Cleveland	27,868	338	29,431	362	7
Gaston	61,380	708	64,648	776	8
Iredell	45,385	391	47,890	435	9
Lincoln	22,694	122	24,083	156	4
Scotland	9,508	117	9,876	126	0
Stanly	18,466	222	19,312	249	3
Union	58,141	425	61,147	473	12
Mecklenburg	262,965	1,443	275,160	1,550	59

The above figures were gathered from the statewide COVID dashboard on both February 02, 2022 and March 03, 2022. The figures are compounding from the initial outbreak of COVID-19 (NCDHHS, 2021).



(Lund)

Severe Weather

By Ronald J Henschel, MPH

Springtime is the beautiful time of year when we look forward to warming weather, getting together with friends, thunderstorms, and of course, tornados. Unfortunately, nothing says you made it through the winter like high winds and lightning strikes! Though for us, this is just a part of life. Review is essential for the severe weather and its impacts, particularly during a pandemic that has most of our focus.

The week of March 6 through the twelfth is North Carolina's Severe Weather Preparedness Week. During that time, there will be a Statewide Tornado Drill on March 9, 2022, at 9:30 am. All schools, workplaces, and families across the state are encouraged to take part. There are some essential things to remember when preparing to participate in the drill. First, where is the drill being broadcasted? The exercise is being broadcast on NOAA Weather Radio and the Emergency Alert System during the monthly required test of the system. Please note that there will not be an actual tornado warning issued. Neither NOAA nor the Emergency Broadcast Systemwide will be broadcasting an end of drill message. Ending the drill is at the discretion of the people running each exercise when they are satisfied with the drill results.

There are several topics of information to cover heading into this severe weather season. First on that list is severe thunderstorms and tornados. Thunderstorms bring a mix of thunder and lightning, can have rain, gusty winds, and even produce hail or snow. Out of the approximately forty to fifty thunderstorms we encounter in a year, ten percent are labeled severe. A severe thunderstorm must have 58 miles per hour or more wind speeds, produce hail at least one inch in diameter, or produce a tornado. (NOAA, 2022)

Tornados can rip through a region in seconds, devastating towns causing fatalities, and can do so with little to no warning. Tornados appear as funnel-shaped clouds reaching down to the ground. Wind speeds can reach an excess of three hundred miles per hour. So why do we need to prepare for the possibility of a tornado? North Carolina averages twenty-eight tornados a year. Out of those twenty-eight tornados, we average thirty-three injuries and two deaths. April 16, 2011, North Carolina experienced thirty individual tornados. Over three hundred injuries and twenty-four deaths occurred that day. (NOAA, 2022)

A tornado watch and a tornado warning what is the difference? If the National Weather Service issues a Tornado Watch, weather conditions are conducive to creating a tornado. You should be alert for approaching storms and pay attention to news outlets for additional information. If a Tornado Warning is issued for your area. The warning means that a tornado has been indicated on the radar or spotted. It would be best to take shelter until the threat has passed immediately. A tornado can last seconds to an hour. (NOAA, 2022)



(Lund)

Severe Weather

By Ronald J Henschel, MPH

Other problems come along with these and other storms, such as flash floods. Floods are a common danger just about everywhere in the United States. Flash floods and floods are common in North Carolina during our storm season. You may see flood warnings or flash flood warnings; both require your attention and a look at your Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). Flash flood warnings may occur during our more severe storms and require quick action on you and your staff's part. A good resource for you and your facility to watch during those times is the FIMAN - Flood Inundation and Mapping Network. <https://fiman.nc.gov> is a free resource that you may want to get an understanding of before you need it.

Here are a few helpful tips when dealing with flash floods:

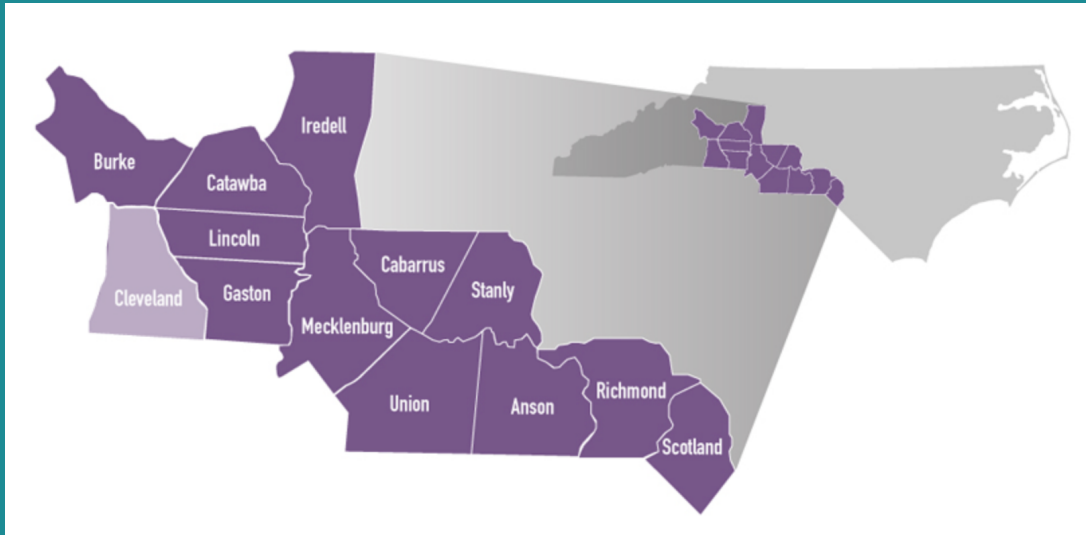
1. Do not wait for instructions to move if you receive a flash flood warning. If you wait, it may already be too late.
2. Do not cross moving water. It only takes six inches of moving water to cause you to fall!
3. Do not drive through flooded areas.

Do not disregard signage and barricades, do not drive around them!

As for your facility, know your local flood planes. Does your facility sit on or near a flood plane? Is your emergency operations plan updated with the current contact information in an emergency? Though there are many severe weather preparedness events happening this month, it is a good time to review your emergency operations plan. Remember that if you do not prepare your facility and staff for an emergency, then you are setting them up for failure. For more information or ways you can prepare visit <https://www.readync.gov>.



(Johnson, 2015)



Conversation Starter: Emergency Plans and Power

WRITTEN BY RONALD J HENSCHEL, MPH

During my time visiting many long-term care facilities, I have noticed that emergency plans in many facilities are not completed or not revised in many years. If your corporate office provided an emergency plan, has it been reviewed to make sure it takes all hazards in your area into account? Has anyone filled out the contact information in the plan? Some plans I have seen are five or more years old, are the contacts listed even at those agencies anymore? It is better to find that out now than when you are in crisis mode.

In this newsletter, we have talked about severe storms. A side effect of those storms can typically be power outages. Many facilities do not have onsite backup power generators. If you are one of those facilities, do you know who will be providing that service? Do you have residents that require power to sustain life? Do you know if the power company has you on a priority list for when power is available? All questions that you should have answered before an event.

If you find that the answers to those questions leave your facility vulnerable, then it is an excellent time to reach out to your county's emergency management office. If you do not have their contact information, please reach out to any Metrolina Healthcare Preparedness coordinators. We will assist you with making contact with your local emergency manager.





Infection Discussion

EPIDEMIC, PANDEMICS, AND ENDEMICS

Some would say that it is hard to believe we have been in a pandemic for two years. Others are astounded that it has only been two years and not the many more that it can sometimes feel passed. We have all heard the buzz words like the "new normal" and many more, but when will that "new normal" start? Many predictions point to 2022 as the year when life can start feeling more "normal." COVID-19 will have to change from a pandemic to an endemic for that to happen. Many news centers are already predicting this change in categorization for this year. Now maybe a good time to discuss the difference between the two terms.

Starting at the core of the terminology, we look at the epidemic. Epidemic means a disease that affects many people at the same time. The disease most spread from person to person in a community or region where the disease is not permanently prevalent. In contrast, the pandemic takes that epidemic when it becomes prevalent through the entirety of a country, continent, or the world. It can become confusing from time to time because pandemic is a term generally reserved for diseases that have spread over continents or the world—many times, using the term epidemic for diseases in only one country.

That explains epidemic and pandemic, but what about an endemic? Endemic may be defined as natural to, confined to, native to, or existing in a population or place. Though the term is mainly used when speaking of diseases, it can be used outside of medicine and health to describe animals, plants, or even human characteristics. This usage is because, by definition, the term can be used in place of native or indigenous. Malaria would be an excellent example of an endemic disease.

So, are we there yet? Is COVID-19 an endemic disease? No, despite all the talk and conversation-starting around the topic, COVID-19 has a way to go before reaching that destination. Due to the disease's mutation slowing widespread immunity, it will be some time before we can safely say that COVID-19 is endemic. What happens then? Once COVID-19 becomes an endemic disease, it is expected to become a reoccurring disease, much like how we deal with the flu season now. Though we have a way to go before we reach that destination, the conversations are becoming more prevalent means we are moving in the correct direction.

Looking forward:

IF THERE IS A TOPIC THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE DISCUSSED IN OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER, PLEASE REACH OUT TO ME AT RONALD.HENSCHEL@ATRIUMHEALTH.ORG.

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