



Date: August 24, 2021

To: U.S. State and Territorial Epidemiologists

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Subject: Implementation of the new 2021 COVID-19 case definition in the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System **starting September 1, 2021**

On June 17, 2021, the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) approved position statement [21-ID-01](#) titled "Update to the standardized surveillance case definition and national notification for 2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19)." For cases identified beginning **September 1, 2021**, jurisdictions should use the case definition approved on June 17, 2021, in position statement [21-ID-01](#). Jurisdictions should not retroactively change the classification of cases reported prior to September 1, 2021.

CDC has posted the new 2021 COVID-19 case definition to the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS) [website](#). The new 2021 COVID-19 case definition:

- updates clinical criteria indicative of infection;
- refines and expands laboratory criteria to include genomic sequencing;
- updates epidemiologic linkage criteria and the definition of close contact;
- acknowledges testing performed in non-traditional settings such as work sites, temporary testing sites, and homes;
- specifies criteria for enumerating new cases in persons previously classified as a probable or confirmed case (i.e., reinfections); and
- clarifies that a case meeting clinical criteria and epidemiologic linkage with no confirmatory or presumptive laboratory evidence for SARS-CoV-2 is classified as probable.

The 2021 COVID-19 case definition replaces the previous interim 2020 COVID-19 case definition described in CSTE position statement Interim-20-ID-02, which was approved on August 5, 2020. Current and historical COVID-19 case definitions are available on the NNDSS [website](#).

As a reminder, the event code for COVID-19 is 11065 and is listed in the [2021 NNDSS event code list](#). COVID-19 continues to be designated immediately nationally notifiable. When CDC begins publishing COVID-19 data in the NNDSS tables, CDC will include case counts for confirmed and probable cases.

As always, thank you for your dedication to surveillance and to prevention and control efforts, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.