

COVID-19 Pandemic



Pandemics and COVID-19

COVID-19 has become a part of our daily lives and is impacting all aspects of health and well-being. While COVID-19 was not on the scene while much of the data for this wellness report was being gathered, the world was first being introduced to this new illness in late 2019.

In 1918, Oklahoma experienced the effects of the deadly Spanish flu. This pandemic killed more than 670,000 people in the U.S., including an estimated 7,350 Oklahomans between October 1918 and April 1919. The COVID-19 pandemic has been unique in many ways. including the ability to spread quickly, severe symptomology and high rate of hospitalizations. Like other viruses, variants have emerged that affect vaccine efficacy, therapeutic treatments, and immunity from previous infection. The COVID-19 pandemic is also one of the first times in history where scientific advancement has provided the ability to develop vaccines and treatments to combat a severe disease outbreak in such a short period of time



HISTORY OF SARS nCoV-2 virus and COVID-19

In December 2019, several cases of viral pneumonia from an unknown form of virus were reported by medical officials in Wuhan, China. The World Health Organization (WHO) began working with Chinese officials to investigate the situation. By January 9, 2020, WHO reported that the outbreak in China was being caused by a novel coronavirus—what would come to be known as SARS-nCo-V-2 (See Glossary for definition). By January 30, 2020, the WHO declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). Two short months later, on March 11, the WHO declared COVID-19 (corona virus infectious disease 2019) a pandemic—a disease that had spread across multiple countries.

Symptoms of COVID-19

Once a person has become infected with the SARS nCoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 disease, they may begin to show symptoms of the disease between 2-14 days after infection. Not all people will have symptoms of the disease even though they are infected, but those individuals are still able to pass COVID-19 on to other people.

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- fever or chills
- cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- fatigue
- muscle or body aches
- headache
- new loss of taste or smell
- sore throat, congestion or runny nose
- nausea or vomiting and diarrhea

This list does not include all symptoms, so if you are concerned, you should always check with your health care provider.

You can protect yourself from COVID-19 by following these prevention measures:

- Wash your hands frequently or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Wear a mask
- Watch your distance so that you maintain at least six feet distance from the person next to you to avoid close contact.
- Get the COVID-19 vaccine.



Why does this information matter?

Covid-19 affects not only physical health, but all aspects of life. One of the significant effects of COVID-19 is the mental health impacts that have occurred as a result. COVID-19 has caused a great deal of disruption leading to anxiety, stress, stigma, and xenophobia (a fear of people from other countries and places). Because of the various lockdowns and quarantines, many people are experiencing feelings of isolation, loneliness, and depression.

COVID-19 has also affected the world from an economic standpoint. Shortterm economic effects include loss of income due to job loss related to shutdowns and industries not having normal business traffic. The travel industry and restaurants, for example, have been hard-hit as a result of the pandemic, leaving workers in these industries furloughed or earning a small fraction of their normal incomes. In the long run, human capital and whole industries may suffer from the deterioration of the very infrastructure that sustains them, further complicating the economic landscape.





A Story of COVID-19 Response in Oklahoma City-County



A standardized hierarchical structure that allows cooperation and a coordinated response among multiple agencies, both within and outside of government, to address emergency situations and coordinate response activities without compromising the decision-making authority of local command (https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/olc/moodle/ds_online_orientation/viewf265.html?id=3139&chapterid=908#:~:text=The%20Incident%20Command%20System%20(ICS,making%20authority%20of%20local%20command)





COVID-19 in Oklahoma and Oklahoma City-Oklahoma County

Between March 12, 2020, and May 31, 2021, there were 85,904 cases of COVID-19, 1,304 deaths and 2,994 hospitalizations. The incidence of COVID-19 cases, deaths and hospitalizations varied throughout Oklahoma County by ZIP code based on a variety of different factors and social determinants.

Among the various ZIP codes in Oklahoma-City County, the highest number of cases were in 73099, and 73013 with 9,422 and 5,519 cases, respectively. The ZIP codes with the most hospitalizations were 73099 and 73110 with 219 and 210 hospitalizations, respectively. The ZIP code with the most deaths were 73170 and 73099 with 94 and 83 deaths, respectively.

Highest Number of COVID-19 Hospitalizations

March 12, 2020 to May 31, 2021



Highest Number of COVID-19 Cases

March 12, 2020 to May 31, 2021



Highest Number of COVID-19 Deaths

March 12, 2020 to May 31, 2021





Oklahoma County: March 12, 2020 - May 31, 2021

Total Cases	Total Deaths	Total Hospitalizations
85,904	1,304	2,994
(Rate per 100,000: 10,773)	(Rate per 100,000: 164)	(Rate per 100,000: 375)





Data Source: Public Health Investigation and Disease Detection of Oklahoma (PHIDDO) Oklahoma City-County 2020-2021 Disease Surveillance Data.



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COVID-19 and Race

COVID-19 has impacted racial minorities more harshly than the White population. In Oklahoma County, Hispanics and Native Americans have experienced higher rates of COVID-19 than other racial/ethnic groups at 8,549 and 8,276 per 100,000, respectively. Asian/Pacific Islander and Multiracial populations have the lowest reported case rates at 6,623 and 3,518 cases per 100,000, respectively. These two groups also have the lowest rates of COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths of all racial/ethnic groups. The Black population has the highest rate of hospitalizations at 511 per 100,000, much higher than Whites at 366 per 100,000. Whites have the highest death rate in Oklahoma County at 180 per 100,000.

March 12, 2020 - May 31, 2021 Oklahoma County	Case Rate/ 100K	Hospitalizations/ 100K	Death Rate/ 100K
White	7,375	366	180
Black	7,974	511	152
American Indian	8,276	300	118
Asian/Pacific Islander	6,623	212	49
Multracial	3,518	158	49
Hispanic	8,549	334	91











COVID-19 and Vaccines

COVID-19 vaccination rates vary widely across racial/ethnic groups in Oklahoma County. Among those who have been vaccinated, Asian/Pacific Islanders are most likely to be vaccinated with 58.4% having received at least one dose of the vaccine and 52.1% being fully vaccinated.

Black/African American, American Indian, and Hispanic populations are all less likely to be vaccinated and have rates for both one dose and full vaccination in the twenties.

With regard to age, the older the individual, the more likely one is to be vaccinated. Of those age 65 or older, 71.7% are fully vaccinated and 80.3% have at least one dose, while among those 18-35 years of age, 33.7% are fully vaccinated and 39.4% have at least one dose.



Percent of Total Population Vaccinated in Each Racial/ Ethnic Group

December 14, 2020 - June 30, 2021 Oklahoma County



















73103 51.7% 73104 59.1% 73105 45.5% 52.3% 73106 73107 37.2% 73108 26.7% 73109 26.8% 73110 28.5% 73111 29.9% 73112 39.3% 73114 30.1% 73115 29.8% 73116 53.1% 73117 31.1% 73118 45.8% 73119 25.5% 73120 39.0% 73121 40.8% 73122 33.7% 73127 27.9% 73128 9.0% 73129 24.7% 73130 37.2% 73131 43.7% 73132 36.8% 73134 50.1% 73135 27.9% 73139 28.5% 73141 29.5% 73142 47.6% 73145 13.6% 73149 26.9% 73150 37.5% 73151 48.5% 73159 23.8% 73162 47.6% 73165 5.1% 73169 36.8% 73170 6.2% 73173 9.2% 73179 46.6% 74857 3.6%

29.7%

21.1%

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Communication

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted inequities in communities around the world, and in Oklahoma County. From COVID testing and tracing to the vaccination campaign, OCCHD made a concerted effort to communicate timely and accurate information to underserved and marginalized communities, as well as the general public throughout Oklahoma County.

Oklahoma County, encompassing the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, is the largest population center in the state. This population density adds complexities to communicating efficient public health messaging, and increases the need for strong, grassroots partnerships and organic, segmented marketing toward specific demographic groups.

Through traditional and non-traditional media, the OCCHD and its partners provided clear, focused messaging to encourage testing, tracing, mitigation and vaccination among the population in Oklahoma County. The OCCHD launched multiple digital platforms to aid in the response efforts, including an online assessment tool that provided daily monitoring of symptomatic individuals; case management to follow up, monitor, and manage individuals for continued risk; and aggregated data to inform key decisions such as testing site locations and mitigation measures such as mask ordinances and social distancing guidelines for specific communities. Once vaccine became available, the OCCHD launched an Oklahoma-County specific vaccine portal, VaxOKC.com, where all appointments available through OCCHD and its partner organizations could be accessed.

The agency used sewage surveillance, cluster mapping and vaccination by zip codes to determine vaccine POD locations. Additionally, the agency used innovative tools such as social media influencer marketing to message to the hard-to-reach 18-35 year-old demographic concerning the importance of vaccine uptake.



See locations below to schedule an appointment.

Outreach

OCCHD worked closely with more than 75 partner organizations across the region toward ensuring equitable access to the vaccine.

Examples include the

- 1. Public and Private School Districts
- 2. Colleges/Career Techs/Universities
- 3. Faith Communities
- 4. Neighborhood/District Associations
- 5. Community/Ethnic Associations
- 6. Chambers of Commerce/Employers
- 7. Entertainment Districts/Museums

Additionally, OCCHD partnered with high volume/high profile events throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, persuading large public events/activities toward enacting mitigation measures to decrease possible outbreaks.

OCCHD and its partners held vaccine PODs for the African-American, Asian, Disabled and Latinx communities, among others. The agency provided the Disability Law Center and the Developmental Disabilities Council of Oklahoma direct access to a sign-up link so their clients could make appointments at a vaccine clinic held at Oklahoma City Community College. The sign-up link listed questions about accommodations clients would need when they arrived for their appointments. Optional accommodations included a quiet space or a wheelchair.

At the clinic, OCCHD helped accommodate residents with mobility challenges by offering a drive-up vaccination station. The Oklahoma National Guard and volunteers from the Oklahoma Medical Reserve Corp were a crucial part of the drive-up option.

OCCHD successfully used digital media, word of mouth strategies and faith-based partnerships to plan PODs targeting the African American and Latinx populations. Additionally, the agency partnered with the Guatemalan, Peruvian and Mexican consulates; the Asian District Cultural Association; and the Diversity Center of Oklahoma City to reach underserved communities.



What We Have Learned So Far

OCCHD had a plan for a health crisis, and when COVID-19 occurred, the agency put its plan into place. Many of the plans functioned as scripted. The OCCHD learned it has great flexibility as an agency. The organization was able to restructure itself to use existing employees to address the concerns most critical at the height of the pandemic, such as testing and vaccination. Many in-person programs were shifted to virtual services or adjusted to less frequent services to allow employees to put full efforts into addressing the COVID-19 crisis.

While many of our plans went as prescribed, there were other lessons that were learned from this pandemic that can be used in future health emergencies and agency operations. One lesson learned is the importance of community input surrounding communication channels. OCCHD often communicated information about various events taking place and received feedback that there were still many in a given community who were unaware of the event. We learned that we did not always use the most efficacious communication channel for a given community, despite our best intentions and efforts. Working in a more focused manner with communities about how to share information may have helped to spread the information in a more effective way.

COVID-19 is an ever-changing health issue. We have learned that we cannot let our guard down. The virus changes quickly and new variants arise. As this report is going to press, we are facing the Delta variant and many new cases of COVID-19 and new challenges. We know that COVID-fatigue is real — for our community members and for our front line workers. Yet we know that we must stay vigilant in order to keep the community safe and meet the needs of Oklahoma City/County. That is what we are here to do. That is our commitment to you.



OCCHD team meets in the on-site Command Center to discuss the COVID-19 health crisis and enable the Incident Command Structure (ICS) for the agency.



OCCHD has hosted drive-thru events for community members to receive free disposable masks and hand sanitizer.



OCCHD's mobile Public Health Response Command Center has been stationed at various COVID-19 response events throughout the course of the pandemic.



OCCHD has hosted drive-thru COVID-19 testing at various locations throughout the community.



OCCHD utilizes their mobile vaccine vans to hold vaccination clinics in various areas throughout the community.



OCCHD Executive Director, Patrick McGough vaccinated OKC Mayor, David Holt.



OCCHD hosts vaccination clinics throughout the community.



OCCHD has tailored COVID-19 messaging throughout the pandemic for various media platforms, including television, radio, social media, bus benches and billboards. Messaging has covered informative topics such as how to protect yourself from COVID-19, where to get a COVID-19 test, how to schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment and other campaigns to inform the public.

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