

# Epi Update for Friday, September 22, 2023

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BUREAU OF HIV, STI, AND HEPATITIS

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Items for this week's Epi Update include

- **Hepatitis C elimination planning: Regional meetings**
- **School illness, absenteeism reporting information updated for 2023-24 respiratory season**
- **Infographic: Know when to wash your hands at school**

## **Hepatitis C elimination planning: Regional meetings**

Iowa HHS is hosting nine regional meetings across Iowa during October and November where attendees can help craft the strategies that will make elimination of hepatitis C in Iowa a reality. The goal is to have a variety of partners, stakeholders, and community members in attendance to ensure that a wide range of unique perspectives and experiences are represented. Please share information about the regional meetings with your networks. The meetings are open to anyone interested in contributing to the planning process.

Those who are unable to attend a regional meeting can engage with the planning process via the planning website. The website will feature regular updates and provides opportunities to submit feedback and ideas.

For a list of meeting dates and locations, plus registration information, visit [www.stophepatitisiowa.org/events](http://www.stophepatitisiowa.org/events).

To submit feedback and ideas about hepatitis C elimination in Iowa, visit [www.stophepatitisiowa.org/get-involved](http://www.stophepatitisiowa.org/get-involved).

## **School illness, absenteeism reporting information updated for 2023-24 respiratory season**

Iowa HHS has released new online surveys for school illness and absenteeism reporting for the 2023-24 respiratory surveillance season, which begins October 1. There are two main systems Iowa HHS uses for school illness surveillance: one for daily illness absenteeism at or above 10% of total attendees, and one for weekly illness regardless of the percent of absenteeism. Data is reported in the weekly *Iowa Respiratory Virus Surveillance Report*.

Iowa HHS needs your help to make sure school illness data represents all of Iowa. Currently, the east and east central parts of the state are well represented, but reporting from more schools in other areas of the state is needed to better track illness throughout Iowa.

All Iowa K-12 schools (and attached preschools) are asked to report when 10% or more of total enrollment is absent on any given day due to illness. Although the survey is administered by the Iowa Influenza Surveillance Program, school illness data is used to monitor increases in illness of any kind and detect possible outbreaks.

Iowa HHS also asks schools to voluntarily report the number of student absences each week, regardless of the amount or type of illness. Iowa uses this data track weekly and yearly trends in school illness.

Both systems use an online survey to submit data.

For more information, including links to the online surveys, visit [hhs.iowa.gov/influenza/schools](http://hhs.iowa.gov/influenza/schools).

**Infographic: Know when to wash your hands at school**



To view in full size, visit [www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/key-times-to-wash-hands-eng-11x17-p.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/key-times-to-wash-hands-eng-11x17-p.pdf).

**Have a healthy and happy week!**

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