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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

To: All HAN Recipients
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COVID-19 Surveillance Definition Changes

As of January 2, 2022, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) is using updated definitions for COVID-19 outbreaks and COVID-19-associated deaths.

COVID-19 outbreak criteria will now depend on facility type. In pre-K-12 schools, an outbreak of COVID-19 will now be defined as greater than or equal to 15% absenteeism among students or staff in a single day, where the majority of those absent are due to COVID-19 illness. For all other facility types, including but not limited to long-term care, hospital, outpatient healthcare, higher education, and businesses, an outbreak of COVID-19 is now defined as 5 or more people who have been in-person at a facility with confirmed or probable COVID-19 within a 14-day period.

With respect to COVID-19-associated deaths, the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) created a standardized COVID-19-associated death definition for 2022 to make data comparable across the nation. Maine CDC is aligning its COVID-19-associated death definition to accord with CSTE's. Under this definition, a COVID-19-associated death is:

- A death in which COVID-19 was determined to be the cause of death or contributed to the death;
- A death in which COVID-19 was included on the death certificate; or
- A death due to natural causes that has occurred within 30 days of specimen collection or symptom onset.

Maine CDC expects an increase in reported COVID-19-associated deaths because of this definitional change.

COVID-19 outbreaks and COVID-19-associated deaths must be reported to Maine CDC. Reporting for schools should occur through NEO. All other facilities, including schools without access to NEO, should report by calling Maine CDC's 24-hour disease reporting line at 800-821-5821 or emailing disease.reporting@maine.gov.

Hospitals can report deaths separately through email to Coronavirus@maine.gov with patient initials, date of birth, and date of death. For privacy reasons, emails should not contain patient names.