

DHEC Pediatric Data Request & Follow-up Questions (04/2022)

Q. What is the specific criteria for data collection for COVID-19 hospitalizations?

DHEC Response (received 04/22/22)

-Capturing hospitalization into our Disease Surveillance System is limited to the timing of the intake interview. This information does not come from the hospital staff. The case investigator asks a question about hospitalization status to the case/parent/caregiver and this is then documented in our Disease Surveillance System. We do not follow up after completion of the interview to inquire who has been subsequently hospitalized for COVID-19. Hospital data is also collected through the federal Teletracking system, through which hospitals are required to send daily data on admissions and occupancy.

Follow-up questions: (no response received by DHEC)

-Thank you. Is the "Disease Surveillance System" DHEC's system of collecting South Carolina data?

-What are the credentials and qualifications of the case investigator?

-Is the case investigator employed by DHEC and on standby at South Carolina hospitals? How does the case investigator engage with the parent or Guardian to collect the information?

-Is there an internal guidance document on the process of collecting this data that you can provide?

Q. How many South Carolina children age 5-18 have been hospitalized with COVID-19?

DHEC Response (received 04/22/22)

- Since March 2020, our Disease Surveillance System lists 506 children between the ages of 5 and 18 as hospitalized due to COVID-19. Again, note that this only counts cases who were hospitalized at the time of case investigation, and case investigation does not cover all cases during surges.

Alternatively, since August 2020, the Teletracking database lists 1,324 children under 17 years of age who tested positive for COVID-19 upon hospital admission and an additional 1,395 who were suspected of having COVID-19 on admission. Note Teletracking only started separating under and over 5 years old on February 2022, and so we do not offer that distinction here.

Dr Abdoulaye Response (received 05/09/22)

For Hospitalizations, as mentioned in the response, DHEC case investigators ask the following question: "*Was the patient hospitalized for this illness?*" Again, what we capture into our Disease Surveillance System is limited to the timing of the intake interview, we do not follow up after completion of the interview to inquire who has been subsequently hospitalized for COVID-19.

Questions: (no DHEC response received)

-If we are understanding properly regarding the Disease Surveillance System data collection criteria, the case investigator asks the parent or legal guardian if their child is COVID-19 positive or has suspected COVID-19 and if their child has been hospitalized as a result of complications from COVID-19 disease. Is this correct?

- If the parent answers yes then that child would be reported in the data as a pediatric hospitalization. Is this correct?

-If the parent states their child's COVID-19 positive status is unrelated to the child's hospitalization then the child would not be included in COVID-19 pediatric hospitalization data. Is this correct?

-Are the children being tested for COVID-19 when they come in for planned hospital procedures included in the reported data for either the Disease Surveillance System or federal Teletracking?

Q. How many South Carolina children age 5-18 were already hospitalized when they tested positive for COVID-19?

DHEC Response (received 04/22/22)

– Information regarding hospitalization status in our Disease Surveillance System is obtained from case investigation. A case is identified through testing and then DHEC subsequently investigates as many of those cases as possible regarding the circumstances surrounding COVID-19. We do not investigate every individual that is in hospital so we cannot determine if a case was already hospitalized prior to testing positive for COVID-19. Furthermore, we are unable to interview every case during surges and not all cases are willing to complete a case investigation interview so hospitalization information may be an underestimate.

Follow-up questions: (no DHEC response received)

-Thank you. Therefore, is it unknown if a COVID-19 positive test or infection reported in the data happened while the child was already hospitalized. Is this correct?

Q. How many South Carolina children age 5-18 had pre-existing medical conditions when hospitalized with COVID-19?

DHEC Response (received 04/22/22)

-Of 506 children aged 5 to 18 years old who were hospitalized with COVID-19, 225 children reported having at least one pre-existing medical condition in our Disease Surveillance System. Of the remainder, 201 reported no comorbidity and 80 are unknown or did not respond. Again, case investigation does not cover all cases during surges.

Follow-up questions: (no response received by DHEC)

-Thank you. Is it unknown if the hospitalized children were hospitalized as a result of COVID-19 disease or had another reason for hospitalization such as an accident, other illness, etc. or are these cases not reported as COVID-19 hospitalizations?

-Is it possible to know how many previously healthy South Carolina children without pre-existing health conditions were hospitalized as a result of COVID-19 disease?

What were the pre-existing medical conditions?

DHEC Response (received 04/22/22)

-Of the 225 children hospitalized with at least one preexisting condition, conditions that affected 10 or more children are listed below. Note that one individual can have multiple conditions at the same time.

Asthma: 28%

Neurologic: 20%

Diabetes: 17%

Obesity: 8%

Immunosuppressive conditions: 7%

Other comorbidities include cardiovascular disease, chronic liver disease, congestive heart failure, COPD /bronchitis/emphysema, smoking, renal disease.

*Thank you.

Were they hospitalized specifically for COVID-19 disease complications or another cause?

DHEC Response (received 04/22/22)

-All 506 children identified by case investigation were hospitalized for COVID-19. 225 of the 506 reported having at least one pre-existing condition. We do not have information on whether pre-existing conditions contributed to hospitalizations due to COVID-19.

Follow-up questions: (no response received by DHEC)

-Thank you. Therefore, is it possible that a child who requires hospitalization with acute appendicitis or was involved in an accident who tests positive on admission to the hospital would be included in the reported data or would the Disease Surveillance System data criteria prevent this?

Q. How many South Carolina children aged 5-18 had no known pre-existing medical conditions and were specifically hospitalized with COVID-19 disease complications?

DHEC Response (received 04/22/22)

-506 children identified by case investigation were hospitalized for COVID-19. 201 of the 506 reported no pre-existing condition. We do not have information on whether pre-existing conditions contributed to hospitalizations due to COVID-19. And again, case investigation does not cover all cases during surges.

*Thank you.

Q. What is the specific criteria for data collection for COVID-19 deaths?

DHEC Response (received 04/22/22)

- Deaths are reported by case investigation and subsequently verified by vital records.

Q. How many South Carolina children age 5-18 have died with COVID-19?

DHEC Response (received 04/22/22)

-There have been 22 COVID-19-related deaths among children aged 5-18.

Dr Abdoulaye Response (received 05/09/22)

For Deaths, DHEC case investigators ask the following questions at the time of the intake interview: *"Is the person deceased?"* If the answer is yes, then they document the follow-up question *"Did the patient die from this illness?"* Subsequently, all reported deaths are then matched against Vital Records for verification and confirmation. This matching also allows to update our Disease Surveillance System with COVID-19 deaths that were reported to Vital Records but not reported to the surveillance system as they should have.

Follow-up questions: (no response received by DHEC)

-Thank you. Our understanding is that the parents or legal guardian is asked by the case investigator if their child died and if their child's death was caused by COVID-19 disease (not that their child had COVID-19 infection or a positive test at the time of death). Is this correct?

-Under the Disease Surveillance System data collection criteria, if an individual is involved in an accident that causes death or had a serious illness that was the primary cause of death and tests positive for COVID-19 that death would not be reported as a COVID-19 death. Is this correct?

-All reported COVID-19 deaths are then matched against Vital Records for verification. Is this correct?

-Does DHEC report data only from the Disease Surveillance System on the DHEC website or also from Vital Records? In other words does DHEC only cross reference deaths with Vital Records from the Disease Surveillance System data and does not report Vital Records data?

*This link provided for Vital Records below was broken. We read through the CDC link below on Vital Records and others to do our best to understand COVID-19 coding guidance for providers. We would be grateful for some clarification what the coding guidelines for COVID-19 associated deaths are in SC. There is a lot of confusion on this.

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvss/coronavirus/Alert-2-New-ICD-code-introduced-for-COVID-19-deaths.pdf>

Q. How many South Carolina children aged 5-18 died with COVID-19 who were already hospitalized when they tested positive for COVID-19?

[DHEC Response](#) (received 04/22/22)

– This is unknown. COVID-19-related deaths are verified by Vital Records. We do not have specific information on children who died of other causes but were COVID-19 positive.

[Dr Abdoulaye Response](#) (received 05/09/22)

On another note, Mr. Moore was also forwarded an email in which you mentioned that links # 2 and # 3 provided in the "Other Resources" section of the document were broken: they should work as provided; although they are not highlighted in blue, they open the resources when you click on them; alternatively you can copy and paste into your browser.

*Thank you. These 2 of these links were broken, however we investigated teletracking and vital records.

Q. How many South Carolina children age 5-18 had pre-existing medical conditions when they died with COVID-19?

[DHEC Response](#) (received 04/22/22)

- From our Disease Surveillance Reporting system, of the 22 deaths among children 5-18 years, 11 have one or more pre-existing condition reported.

*Thank you.

Q. What were the pre-existing medical conditions?

-Among the 11 children who died of COVID-19 with pre-existing conditions, the conditions that were listed include asthma, cardiovascular disease, COPD/bronchitis/emphysema, diabetes, immunosuppression, neurologic conditions, obesity, renal disease, renal failure dialysis, and stroke. We cannot provide percentages due to data suppression rules.

Q. How many South Carolina children age 5-18 had no pre-existing medical conditions and their death was caused specifically from COVID-19 disease complications?

[DHEC Response](#) (received 04/22/22)

-From our Disease Surveillance Reporting system, of the 22 deaths among children 5-18 years that were due to COVID-19, 5 reported no known pre-existing conditions and 6 are unknown or did not respond to this question.

Follow-up questions: (no response received by DHEC)

-Is it possible to know how many previously healthy South Carolina children without pre-existing health conditions died as a result of COVID-19 disease?

-It looks like the data reported on the DHEC website is from the Disease Surveillance System only. Is this correct?

Other Resources that may be helpful regarding the diagnosis of COVID-19:

1. Federal Teletracking Hospital Data Dictionary: <https://help.ci-teletracking.com/en-us/c19/Content/covid-19/Data%20Sources.htm>

*404 Not Found

2. Federal Teletracking Hospital Data: <https://healthdata.gov/Hospital/COVID-19-Reported-Patient-Impact-and-Hospital-Capa/anag-cw7u>

3. Vital Records : <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvss/coronavirus/Alert-2-New-ICD-code-introduced-for-COVID-19-deaths.pdf>

*Resource not available

Q-We also had this question sent on 6/3/22. (no response received by DHEC)

Dear Dr Abdoulaye,

We noticed DHEC was tracking vaccination status and was reporting the data on the website, however it was removed earlier this year.

Is DHEC continuing to track this data (see below)?

Have a great weekend!

Sincerely,
Denice

<https://scdhec.gov/covid19/covid-19-data/cases-hospitalizations-deaths-among-not-fully-vaccinated>

VACCINATION STATUS AND COVID-19

DECEMBER 16, 2021—JANUARY 15, 2022



Out of 38,414 Reported Cases



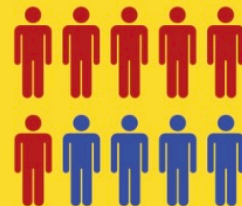
62%
NOT FULLY VACCINATED

Out of 1,328 Hospitalizations



47%
NOT FULLY VACCINATED

Out of 371 Deaths



64%
NOT FULLY VACCINATED

All data are provisional and subject to change.

Thank you again!