



# MEDIA RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS

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## **Health Department to Resume Twice-Weekly Data Update**

*New Director of Communicable and Environmental Disease & Emergency Preparedness Hired*

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.— The Knox County Health Department epidemiology team will begin updating COVID-19 case count data on their [website](#) on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

“By increasing the frequency of our data updates, we can provide a clearer picture of the local situation,” said Senior Director and Public Health Officer Dr. Martha Buchanan.

At this point, the health department doesn’t feel it’s necessary to hold weekly briefings or restart the Joint Information Center. Rather, the Mayor’s Office and KCHD will work together to address all media inquiries. We ask that questions be sent to [Mike.Donila@knoxcounty.org](mailto:Mike.Donila@knoxcounty.org), [Abbey.Harris@knoxcounty.org](mailto:Abbey.Harris@knoxcounty.org), and [Kelsey.Wilson@knoxcounty.org](mailto:Kelsey.Wilson@knoxcounty.org) and copied to [communications@knoxcounty.org](mailto:communications@knoxcounty.org), which is a general mailbox.

Additionally, Roberta Strum has been promoted to Director of Communicable and Environmental Disease and Emergency Preparedness, filling the position vacated by Charity Menefee in July; she has served the health department for 13 years, most recently as the county’s lead Emergency Preparedness Epidemiologist. Sturm has a bachelor’s degree in Public Health from the University of Tennessee, a master’s degree from East Tennessee State University, and is currently pursuing a Master of Science Degree in Homeland Security Studies from the Naval Post Graduate School. Sturm has also taught epidemiology and biostatistics at King University and serves as an instructor at the University of Tennessee.

“Roberta has been an invaluable asset in the fight against COVID-19 in Knox County and was recently recognized as one of the County’s Employees of the Month,” said Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs. “She has always been gracious in sharing information, always explains things in layman’s terms, and is well-qualified to take on this new role.”

Though Knox County is experiencing an increase in cases, 47 percent of the county’s population is fully vaccinated, and 52 percent have received at least one shot—both numbers are above the state average and ahead of 87 other Tennessee counties.

“I encourage Knox Countians to speak to their physician about the vaccine,” said Mayor Jacobs. “Please stay home if you are sick, practice good hygiene, and follow health care guidance when appropriate. I also encourage everyone to respect the choices our fellow citizens make. This is a great community, but we can’t stay that way if we continue to aggressively tear one another down.”

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