

Seeking Norovirus Reduction: Developing New and Improved Employee Health Tools

FDA



June 11, 2024 – Retail Track – [Interactive Session](#)

CDC: Beth Wittry

FDA: Laurie Farmer, Katherine Del Mundo, Carolyn White

Industry/First Watch: Shelly Wallingford



Agenda

Healthy People 2030 – HHS and AFDO

What does the CDC and FDA research tell us?

The Strength of Food Safety Management Systems

Employee Health Assessment Tool- Demonstration

Let's Talk About Norovirus – Engagement Session



Reducing Foodborne Illness

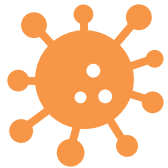




Norovirus at Retail



Restaurants are the most common outbreak location



Norovirus is the most common pathogen



Ill food workers most commonly contribute to outbreaks



AFDO Healthy People 2030 Foodborne Illness Reduction



**U.S. FOOD & DRUG
ADMINISTRATION**

Department of Health and
Human Services

Healthy People 2030
National Objectives

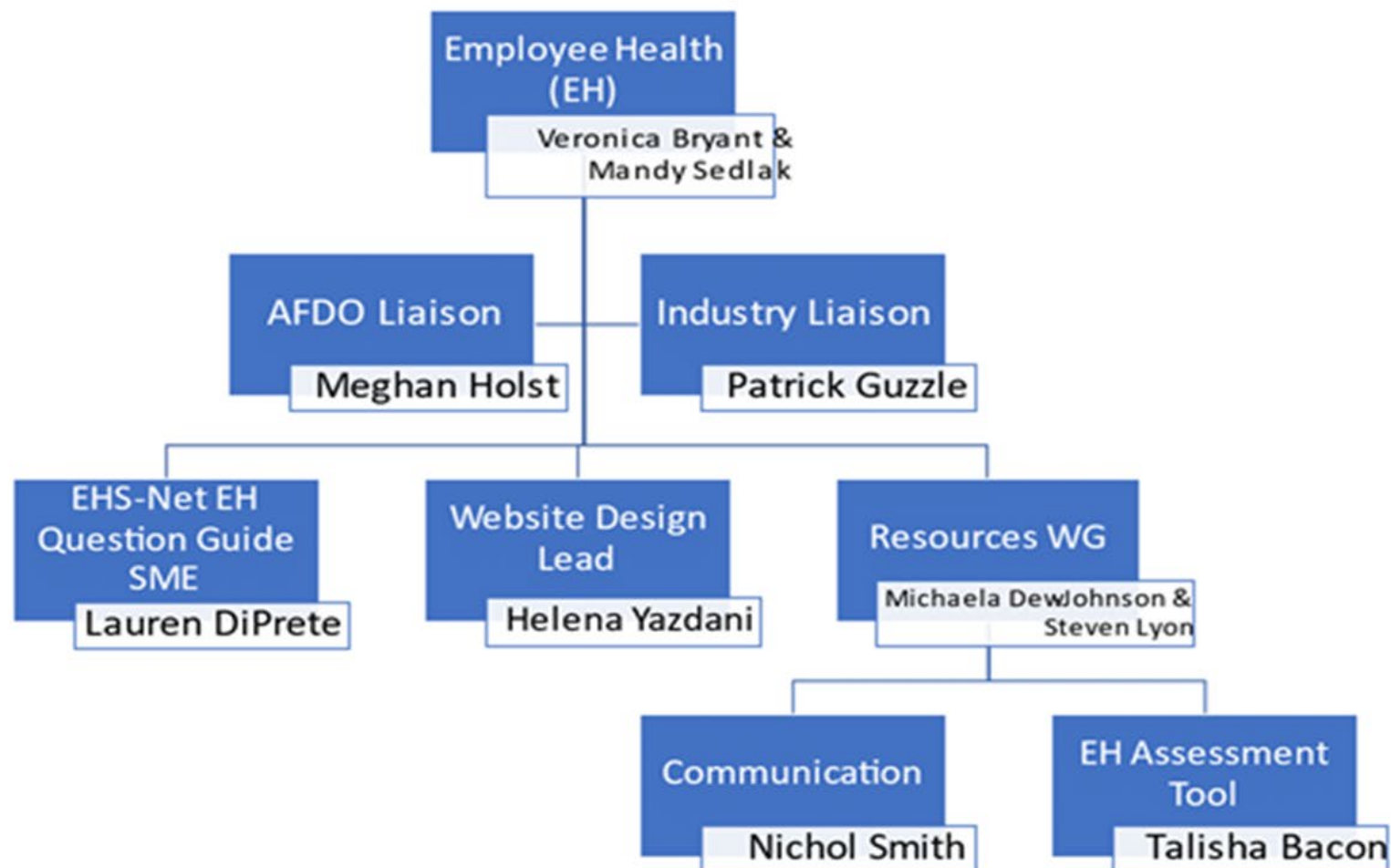
AFDO Healthy People
2030 Areas of
Emphasis

Norovirus at Retail
Workgroup

- Over 110 food safety leaders came together in March 2023 to continue their work around reducing foodborne illness burden based on the national Healthy People 2030 objectives focused on food safety
- Current AFDO Workgroups & Areas of Emphasis
 - Norovirus in retail food establishments
 - Reduce the number of outbreaks associated with norovirus in retail
 - Developmental Goal
 - Targeted Efforts- Model Charter and Strategic Planning
 - STEC associated with Produce
 - Agricultural Water Sub-group
 - Root Cause Analysis- Evolved from STEC/Produce to be its own workgroup
 - Salmonella associated with Poultry
 - Working in partnership with the Coalition for Safer Poultry Reform
 - One Health related to Food Safety
 - Currently focusing on the animal/environment/human interaction related to produce
 - Communications Workgroup
 - Product of the 2023 in-person meeting and still in development stage
- Progress is reported out 2x/year to the AFDO HP2030 Steering Workgroup and AFDO Board of Directors



Healthy People 2024 Norovirus Workgroup





Norovirus Workgroup: Current Members



Inclusive Representation of Stakeholders → Dynamic

- Federal government

- CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- FDA: U.S. Food and Drug Administration
- EPA: Environmental Protection Agency

- Industry

- NRA: National Restaurant Association
- NRF: National Retail Federation
- FMI: Food Marketing Institute
- HAG: Holland America Group

Variety of Brands:

- Chick-Fil-A
- Dyersify
- EcoLab
- First Watch
- LobsterInk
- McDonalds
- Wendy's

- Associations

- AFDO: Association of Food and Drug Officials
- NEHA: National Environmental Health Association
- NACCHO: National Association of County and City Health Officials
- CFP: Conference for Food Protection

- Academia

- NCSU: North Carolina State University
- OSU: The Ohio State University
- Northeastern University

- Regulatory

- RIDOH: Rhode Island Department of Health
- SNHD: Southern Nevada Health District
- NC DHHS: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
- MA: Massachusetts Department of Public Health
- UT: Utah Department of Agriculture

AFDO Healthy People 2030 Norovirus Workgroup

The Vision

turning research into action



Leveraging environmental health data to develop employee health tools

Beth Wittry, MPH, REHS, CP-FS

CDR, USPHS

Environmental Health Officer

128th AFDO Annual Educational Conference

June 11, 2024



We use environmental health data to inform foodborne outbreak prevention strategies.

- Identify characteristics and practices linked with foodborne outbreaks
- Understand how and why sick workers continue to work while sick
- Assess the effectiveness of prevention strategies in retail food establishments

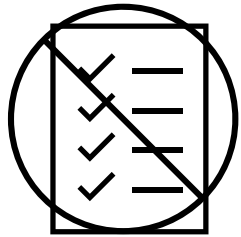


Data show we need to prioritize employee health interventions.





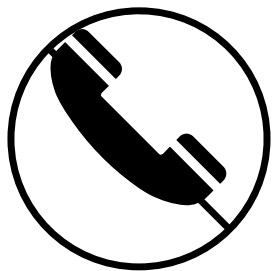
Workers more likely to say they had worked with vomiting or diarrhea if:



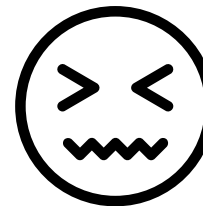
No restaurant sick worker policy



Were concerned about short-staffing



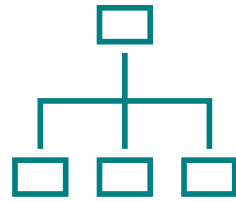
No restaurant plan for when workers called in sick



Were afraid that they would lose their job



People are the top norovirus outbreak root causes.



**Lack of managerial oversight/
policy enforcement**



Lack of training on processes



Lack of food safety culture

Employee health plans work to prevent norovirus.



- Retail food industry will **avoid 6.7M noro cases** annually if sick workers stay home
- Workers are:
 - **75% less likely** to get infected with noro when sick workers stay home
 - **226% at increased risk** of getting infected with noro when sick workers come to work



Restaurants with food safety management systems had fewer unsafe food practices.



Norovirus outbreaks are smaller in restaurants with:



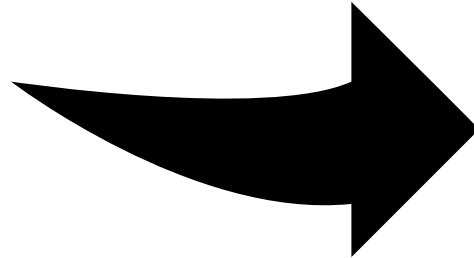
Training and certification



Policies



Practices



There is no 'one simple trick.'

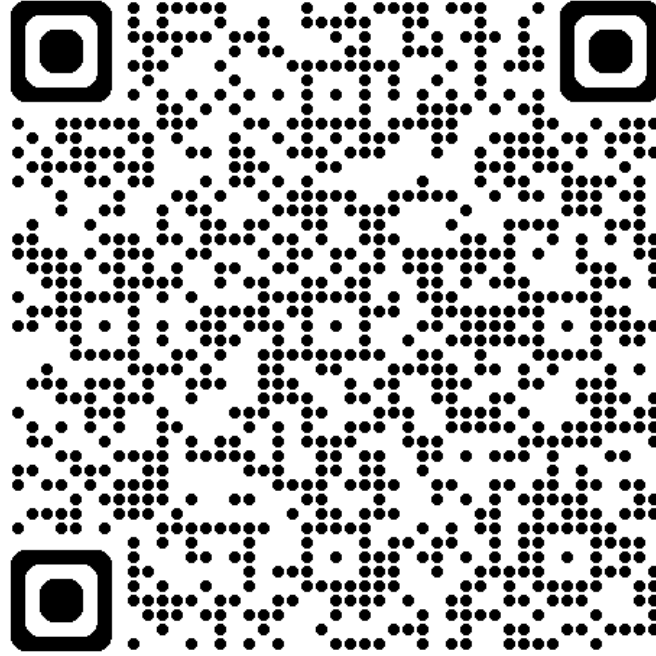
- Strong food safety **management** systems (FSMS) are key
 - Linked with less severe foodborne outbreaks
 - Lack of a FSMS is linked with outbreaks and sick workers



Regulators and industry need better tools.

- One stop shop for noro prevention resources and tools
- Collaborative forums between regulators and industry
- **Employee Health Assessment App**





For more information, contact NCEH/ATSDR

1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)

TTY: 1-888-232-6348

www.atsdr.cdc.gov

www.cdc.gov

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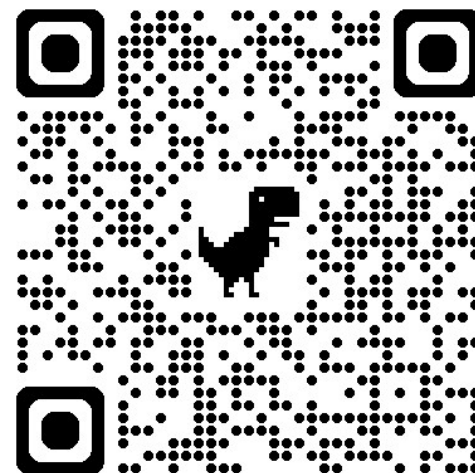
The findings and conclusions in this presentation have not been formally disseminated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention / the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and should not be construed to represent any agency determination or policy.



ATSDR



Employee Health Policy Tool



2022 FDA Food Code

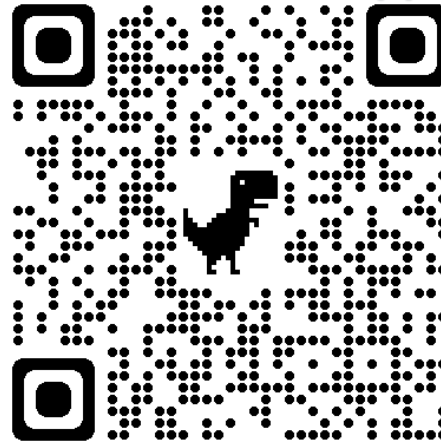


Are We Ready to
Discuss
Employee Health?

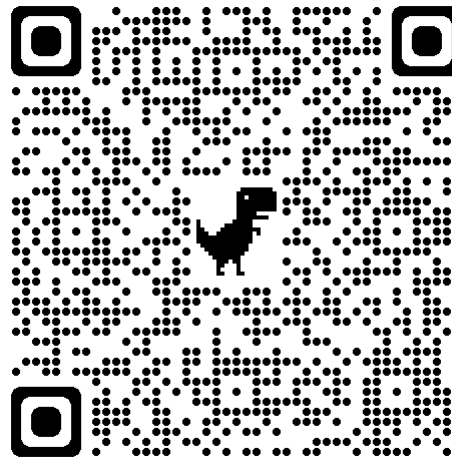
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 - ▶ Enter session ID: **AFDO**
- ▶ If you cannot download PointSolutions to your phone, you can navigate to ttpoll.com using Google Chrome.

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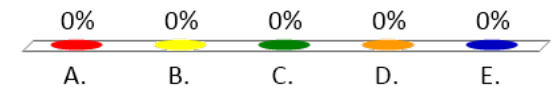
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How Much Time is Spent Discussing Employee Health During an Inspection?



- A. 0-10 Minutes
- B. 10-20 Minutes
- C. 20-30 Minutes
- D. More than 30 minutes
- E. I don't know





What Questions are Regulators Asking?

What Prevents
Regulators
from Focusing
on Employee
Health?






Are Establishment Managers Comfortable Discussing Employee Health with Their Staff?

What Tools
Have You
Developed to
Address
Employee
Health?





Industry Developed
Robust COVID Protocols.
How Can We Leverage
That Knowledge and
Shift Focus to Foodborne
Illness?





Where Will You Start?



We Need Your Help and Feedback!

- Use the EH tool and tell us what you think →
- Contact us to volunteer and/or share other EH tools
 - Laurie Farmer: Laurie.Farmer@fda.hhs.gov
 - Beth Wittry: xks5@cdc.gov
 - Veronica Bryant: veronica.bryant@dhhs.nc.gov
 - Or put your name and contact info in the hat and we'll reach out to you
- Thank you for your participation!

