

Wastewater Infrastructure & Operations for an Enduring Public Health Partnership

Wastewater Monitoring for Early Detection of COVID-19 Infected Populations

Beverley Stinson, PhD, PE DHS/NIST Workshop June 14, 2021

Delivering a better world



Presentation Overview

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Engineering in Partnership with Public Health Brief History

Before the Eighteenth Century

- Plague; Cholera; Smallpox
- Some thought to be caused by poor moral and spiritual condition
- Mediate through prayer and piety
- Control through isolation and quarantine

Nineteenth Century: The Great Sanitary Awakening

- Protecting public health became a social responsibility
- Identified "filth" as one of causes and transmission of infectious diseases
- Increased urbanization caused unsanitary conditions in working class areas
- General Report on the Sanitary Conditions published
 - Identified foul air from decomposing waste as cause
 - Necessary to build drainage network to remove sewage and waste

First Sewer Systems in the US – 1850s

- Chicago and Brooklyn
- Helped control outbreak of diseases such as Cholera and Typhoid
- Began public health partnership
- 4 DHS/NIST Workshop: Water Solutions for Future Resilience 14 June 2021



"To prevent the hardship of this last year from happening again, pandemic preparedness must be taken as seriously as we take the threat of war."

– GATES FOUNDATION



Engineering in Partnership with Public Health Sewer System Basics

Main Function of Sanitary Sewer System - Protect water supply and Public Health

Sewer Systems Consist of:

- Underground pipes, manholes and pumping stations to convey sewage flow to wastewater treatment plants
- Piping network is designed with drainage areas from cities and neighborhoods to campuses, buildings and homes.
- Designed like a transportation system with streets/roads (small lateral sewer pipes) going to super-highways (trunk sewers and interceptors) to final destination (wastewater treatment plant)

Existing infrastructure and 21st Century Surveillance

- Conducive to sampling individual areas and in the aggregate
- Data in wastewater can be harvested for warning of today's threats pandemics, opioids, biological etc.
- No need for large capital expenditures the infrastructure is in place
- Sampling methods in sewer system and frequencies should be standardized
- Daily sampling for SPDES and NPDES permits is standard





Engineering in Partnership with Public Health

A phased approach allows for early detection at specific locations.



accelerate wastewater testing to promote confidence in reopening and provide up to 2 weeks of advance notification of virus reemergence.

Monitoring at multiple WWTPs in small, medium and large metropolitan and suburban areas allows for localized identification of infection. Sampling in sequentially smaller subsections of the sewage collection system can help to identify local infection hotspots.



Engineering in Partnership with Public Health

Wastewater Monitoring is Currently the Only Leading Indicator in the Toolbox

Early warning can inform strategies that help:

- Contain the virus.
- Limit the spread.
- Protect the most vulnerable.
- Avoid large-scale shutdowns.
- Verify efficacy of vaccination programs.
- Identify generic variants.





Engineering in Partnership with Public Health Sampling and Testing Logistics and Methods: **4 Key Steps** Identify Sampling Locations, Install Composite Samplers – Grab samples acceptable at WWTPs Preserve and Ship Samples to Equipped 2 Laboratories for SARS-CoV-2 RNA analysis Analysis – CDC Test Methods, RT-qPCR, Normalization of Results, Statistical Analysis en local Patient data and WW Mor Trends in Covid-19 Over time in a Commun rrelated with Back to work Act Reports – Heat Maps and Trending Graphs

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Engineering in Partnership with Public Health

How a sewer system was leveraged to warn of Infectious Disease – Israeli Case Study

- Israel realized polio was being transmitted actively in 2013.
- A sewage surveillance system set up in 1989 by the Israeli Ministry of Health to detect poliovirus – sounded the alarm. Health officials worked quickly to vaccinate the public.
- To track polio in human waste in Israel, samples are automatically collected from sewage trunk lines and treatment plants approximately weekly.
- Positive sewage samples during the 2013 outbreak came from the Negrev region.
- Based on molecular characteristics of the virus isolated from the sewage, the virus originated in Pakistan, then traveled into the region, diverging into Egypt, Israel, and Syria.
- Policy decisions were enacted to mitigate the spread of the virus.



Human circulation creates pathways for potential spreading of the virus.





BCUA Sewer Shed

- Populations Served at Little Ferry WPCF 580,000
- 47 Townships
- Mixed Residential (suburban/urban), Industrial, Commercial
- Existing wastewater system
 - 2 WWTPs
 - 9 pumping stations
 - 170 metering chambers

Program Highlights

- Period May 12,2020 to Present
- Total Population "Pool Tested" 800,000
- Over 1,200 samples analyzed using RT-qPCR
 - Little Ferry WPCF Influent Pre-Chlorination & Post Chlorination
 - Points throughout the Little Ferry WPCP Liquid & Solids
- County Jail
- Hospital
- 14 individual Towns/areas





Program Methods

- Received split of standard composite samples taken SPDES compliance at Little Ferry WPCP (580,000 people "pool tested")
- **Composite samplers** installed in existing metering chambers, pump stations and manholes in the sewer collection system (Additional 200,000 people)
- Sampling frequency: 2 times per week per site
- RT-qPCR Testing in laboratory
- Results analyzed for concentrations & trends, correlated to actual reported cases
- Report weekly to Bergen County







Lessons Learned

- Existing wastewater infrastructure is well designed to facilitate wastewater surveillance for large and small populations
- NPDES and SPDES permits require sampling and testing at all plants only addition splits of those samples are required
- 24- hour composite samplers are preferred for both treatment plans and collection system points – However grab samples at large well mixed flows in a large can be used.
- Pre-chlorination does not impact the data significantly
- Some degradation of RNA throughout the wastewater treatment process
- Suggested sampling regiment
 - Minimum 1 time per week per site
 - Increase to 2 or 3 times per week as concentrations and reported cases increase

By using existing wastewater infrastructure, weekly pool testing is done for "pennies per person"











Sampling in Wastewater Collection System and Individual Facilities



Lessons Learned

- Daily tailgate safety meetings including weather hazards
- PPE. Steel toe boots, Tyvek coveralls, Nitrile or equivalent gloves, face mask, safety glasses and face shield for splash protection.
- Rigorous decontamination using bleach solution for equipment and hand /face washing for crews
- Two person teams at all times for Safety.
- Develop automated sample chain of Custody



Wastewater Surveillance Provides Public Health Information to Bergen County

"By testing the wastewater entering the Bergen County Utilities Authority's (BCUA's) collection system for COVID-19, public health experts and local officials have access to important data for managing resources in response to the pandemic" The BCUA remains committed to our partnership with the County of Bergen, AECOM and Columbia University and looks forward to continuing this important public health initiative to help spot new trends in concentration data."

- Robert Laux, Executive Director of the Bergen County Utilities Authority



BERGEN COUNTY WASTEWATER TESTS INDICATE STEADY DECREASE IN COVID-19 COMMUNITY SPREAD

June 10, 2021, 12:30 pm | in

BERGEN COUNTY WASTEWATER TESTS INDICATE STEADY DECREASE IN COVID-19 COMMUNITY SPREAD

COVID-19 concentration samples show decrease since April 2021

(HACKENSACK, NJ) – Bergen County's ongoing Wastewater Testing program indicates that concentration levels of COVID-19 have demonstrated a steady decrease since April 2021.

According to a May 25 report from project partner, AECOM, "concentrations in the composite samples have shown a downward trend in SARS-CoV-2." The report went on the specify that during the most recent collection period (May 15 to May 21), all municipalities serviced by the BCUA were reporting less than 500 copies/ml, with the exception of five outliers that either maintained the same level of magnitude or had a slight uptick.

The wastewater concentration data shows a correlation with several reports indicating a general decrease in positive COVID-19 cases in Bergen County. The month of May saw 1,116 total positive COVID-19 cases in Bergen County, down significantly from the 7,210 recorded in March. As of May 25, the most recent positivity score for New Jersey's northeast region, which includes Bergen, Essex, and Hudson Counties was 1.99. That is down from 10.81 in late March.







Impact of chlorination

There was no systematic impact of influent chlorination in the concentrations of SARS-CoV-2 copies in most of the influent wastewater grab samples.



Some differences were observed in the results from grab and composite samples.

Given the expected variability in influent wastewater flow and composition, it might be beneficial to obtain composite samples where feasible

Strong parallel trends were observed in the Post-Cl2 grab and composite samples

N2









- In general, <u>comparable or lower</u> virus concentrations were observed in the primary sludge samples compared to the raw sewage influent samples (normalized to sample volume)
- Partitioning of the virus between the aqueous and solids phases needs to be quantified



Some degree of variability observed in the results from the mixed-liquor grab samples.

In general, the SARS-CoV-2 concentrations in ML were less frequently detected and visually lower than in primary sludge.

- The impact of virus-solids association needs further investigation
- Fate in the solids streams needs to be determined
- Impact of solids on (differential) assay efficiency and sample pre-treatment needs to be considered

BCUA Sampling Locations	PVSC Sampling Locations
Cliffside Park	Fair Lawn #1
Englewood	Fair Lawn #2
Fairview	Lodi
Paramus	Lyndhurst #1
Hackensack	Lyndhurst #2
Bergenfield	Garfield
Little Ferry WPCF - Post Cl Infl.	Elmwood Park





RAPID: Viral Structure Function – Activity in the Engineered Wastewater Cycle Kartik Chandran, CBET - 2026599

Program: 1440/Environmental Engineering Program, COVID-19 Research

Technical Goals: 1.) To develop a science-based understanding of the link between **SARS-CoV-2 presence in wastewater streams** and the **health of the contributing communities.** 2.) To determine the **fate of SARS-CoV-2 and other viruses** in engineered **wastewater treatment plants**.



Sewage treatment plants and sewersheds

University residential buildings

Healthcare and incarceration facilities

Wave III

'predicted'

- Trends in wastewater SARS-CoV-2 concentrations <u>precede</u> trends in clinical Covid-19 positive cases <u>by up to two weeks</u>.
 - Results of long-term monitoring in Bergen County, NJ -
- Wastewater testing can provide an indication of overall community infection.
- By extension, wastewater testing can also track the efficacy of vaccination efforts.







1.E+04

8.E+03



A public private partnership to help protect Kentucky correctional facility inmates and staff from COVID-19

Testing wastewater discharge can provide a leading indicator of COVID-19 presence and trends





Kentucky Correctional Facility WW Sampling Program

Expanded Program Setup

Pilot Program

- Sampling commenced at KSR & KCIW on August 31, 2020
- Sampling concluded on November 23, 2020

Expanded Program

- Conducted initial site visits with site contacts in December 2020
- Teledyne ISCO Glacier samplers installed at all 14 correctional facilities in January

Crews Deployed

Samples obtained starting the week of January 11th





COVID-19 RNA Concentrations at 14 Facilities



Sample collection and processing is ongoing and is expected to continue through 2021

Three two-person crews

- Western Area
- Central Area
- Eastern Area

Samples collected three (3x) per week for 52 weeks



Custom Dashboard Provides Real Time Information Immediately



Heat Map Identifies Facilities with Elevated Levels

- Total Number of Facilities with Level Indication – Green, Yellow, Red
- Data Trending of Facilities -Number Increasing or Decreasing
- One Click to Specific Facility Data throughout the Sample Chain of Custody and Test Results

Secure Login for Department of Corrections and Public Health Commissioners, and each Warden



Custom Dashboard Provides Real Time Information at a Glance



 Facility Comparison for Macro Information of Entire System



Specific Facility Dashboard – Wastewater Sample Chain of Custody Information





Specific Facility Dashboard – Wastewater Sample Chain of Custody Information

Kentucky Department of Corrections	s COVID-19 Wastewater Monitor	Daily Operations Filter 2/1/2021					
14 Correctional Facilities	Field Notes and F Click a facility in the list to						
Bell County Forestry Camp (BCFC) - 8 copies/ml on 01/25/2021 - Very Small increase detected 2 copies/ml on 01/22/2021	BCFC Wk 3 / Day 3 - Eastern Area Bell County Forestry Camp Composite Sample on 1/29/2021, 10:45 AM #3003040123 Light brown, 65/96 samples collected, clear weather, some sedinent **tocation inaccurate could not load app at site** (Corby Smith)	↓ 1 of 7 ▷ 1/29/2021, 10:45 AM - BCFC (Wk 3/Day 3) Sample_site_image-20210129-130719.jpg	AM - BCFC (Wk 3/Day 3) le_site_image-20210129-130719.jpg Kentucky Department of Corrections COVID-19 Wastewater Monitor Advanced Project Operations Dashboard				
Blackburn Correctional Complex (BCC) - 64 copies/ml on 01/27/2021 Very Small increase detected 59 copies/ml on 01/25/2021	BCFC Wk 3 / Day 2 - Central Area Bell County Forestry Camp Composite Sample on 1/27/2021, 10:45 AM #30020400107 Light brown/foggy, half jug, some sediment, clear weather, *location not accurate, could not load app at site* (Corby Smith)		Most Recent Wastewater Test Results Bell County Forestry Camp (BCFC)	Delivered to Lab	Sample Delivery	& Chain of Custody Total Lab Kits	Total Lab Kits
Eastern Kentucky Correctional Complex (EKCC) 113 copies/ml on 01/27/2021 Very Small Increase detected 5 copies/ml on 01/25/2021	not accurate, could not load app at site* (Corby Smith) BCFC Wk 3 / Day 1 - Eastern Area Bell County Forestry Camp Composite Sample on 1/25/2021, 11:30 AM #3001040091		B copies/ml on 01/22/2021 Very Smill Increase detected 2 copies/ml on 01/22/2021	0 🖻 Pending Reciept	1 🏎 In Transit	25 Received By Lab	Lost By Shipper
Green River Correctional Complex (GRCC) 13 copies/ml on 01/25/2021 Very Smallnerces detected	Half igg (56/76), light brown tint, some sediment, rainy weather. (Corby Smith) BCFC Wk 2 / Day 3 - Eastern Area Bell County Forestry Camp Composite Sample on 1/22/2021, 6:15 PM		Blackburn Correctional Complex (BCC) 64 copies/ml on 01/27/2021 Very Small increase detected 59 copies/ml on 01/25/2021	Sample Delivery St Chain of Custody not co Eastern Team CoC # 3003050 WK 3 - Day 3 - 1/29/2021, 7:41 Tracking # J/2E1428E4179088	omplete	Eastern - Chain of Custody no Chain of Custody # 3003050 Received by	t complete
B copies/ml on 01/22/2021 Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women (KCIW) 6 copies/ml on 01/25/2021	#20030400081 Light brown color, full jug, clear weather *location not accurate could not load app at site* (Corby Smith) BCFC Wk 2 / Day 1 - Eastern Area		Eastern Kentucky Correctional Complex (EKCC) 113 copies/ml on 01/27/2021 Very Small Increase disterted 105 copies/ml on 01/25/2021	Chain of Custody received by lab Central Team CoC # 3003040 WK 3 - Day 3 - 1/29/2021, 5:43 PM Tracking #		Wk 3 / Day 3 1/29/2021, 7:41 PM CoCPhoto-20210130-002412.jpg	
Bell County Forestry Camp Kery Smill decrease decked 11 copies/ml on 01/20/2021 Kentucky State Penitentiary (KSP) 12 copies/ml on 01/25/2021 BCFC Wk 1 / Day 3 - Eastern Area			Green River Correctional Complex (GRCC) 13 copies/ml on 01/25/2021 Very small Increase detected 8 copies/ml on 01/22/2021	opies/ml on 01/25/2021 mall increase detected iss/ml on 01/22/2021, 3:46 PM Tracking # Chain of Custody received by lab Eastern Team CoC # 3002050 Wk 3: Day 2: 1/28/2021, 9:50 AM Tracking # 1/28/28215/580.607771		And and an an and an an and an an and an and an	
Very Smill General Sector	ell County Forestry Camp pmposite Sample on 1/15/2021, 10:25 AM (0030500030) endall Stone) CEC Wk 1 / Day 2 - Eastern Area		Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women (KCIW) 6 copies/ml on 01/25/2021				Firs Genomic analysis Caracteria and Caracteria Caracteria and Car
Correctional Facilities Compare Facilities	Default Dashboard Field Operations Site Map Field Notes I	ab Delivery Historical Trends / Time Series	Very Small decrease detected 11 copies/ml on 01/20/2021 Kentucky State Penitentiary (KSP) 12 copies/ml on 01/25/2021	Central Team CoC # 3002040 Central Team CoC # 3002040 Wk 3 - Day 2 - 1/27/2021, 10:4 Tracking # Chain of Custody receiv	14 PM	and the second s	chain of Cust
			Very Small decrease advected 15 copies/ml on 01/20/2021	Western Team CoC # 3002060 Wk 3 - Day 2 - 1/27/2021, 3:31 Tracking #) -	14 TS	
			Correctional Facilities			ago E 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5	2 E B K M K K S K



Specific Facility Dashboard – Concentration of SARS-CoV-2 RNA at Specific Facilities





Key Findings and Ongoing Work



- Viral dynamics in wastewater capture the multiple Covid-19 waves.
- Very cost effective and fast compared to individual clinical testing.
- Wastewater virus trends lead clinical data by approximately one week and as much as approximately two weeks.
 - Can provide valuable time for actions to protect human health (testing, quarantine, other measures).
 - Very good correlation between viral RNA protein concentration in wastewater and number of infected individuals in the sewer shed of the community.
- Provide a measure of health for the <u>overall community in advance</u> of clinical testing.
- Determines and verifies efficacy of vaccination programs.
- Monitoring expanding to other sites with complementary analysis.
- Genetic sequencing to detect variants underway.



Acknowledgments

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- Commonwealth of Kentucky
- GHI
- Columbia University
- National Science Foundation
- ALS Global Laboratories
- Eurofins Laboratories

Beverley Stinson, PhD Beverely.Stinson@aecom.com

Paul Storella, PE Paul.Storella@aecom.com







Thank you.

Beverley Stinson, PhD Beverely.Stinson@aecom.com

Paul Storella, PE Paul.Storella@aecom.com

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BCUA Phase 1 Results – Little Ferry WPCF





Results Summary

Grab and composite samples from locations at the selected towns were collected and tested at ALS Global Laboratories in Houston TX. It needs to be noted that the grab samples provide an instantaneous reading of concentrations and cannot be used for correlation to the composite samples taken at Little Ferry.

During the periods below, elevated concentrations (copies/mL) in the samples were noted at the following locations:

Location	Copies/mL (samples detected/total samples)								
	3/8-3/12*	3/15-3/19*	3/22-3/26*	4/5-4/9*	4/12-4/16*	4/19-4/23*	4/26-4/30*	5/3-5/7*	5/10-5/14*
Cliffside Park	3,000 (1/2)	6,000 (1/2)	500 (1/1)	900 (1/1)**	900 (1/2)**	2,000 (1/2)**	1,000 (2/2)**	1,000 (1/2)**	200 (1/2)**
Elmwood Park	1,500 (1/2)	3,000 (1/2)	700 (1/1)	500 (1/1)	1,000 (1/2)**	2,000 (1/1)**	900 (1/2)**	500 (1/2)**	200 (2/2)**
Fairview	3,000 (1/2)	256,000 (1/2)	500 (1/1)	<500 (1/1)**	2,000 (1/2)**	8,000 (1/2)**	2,000 (1/2)**	100 (1/2)**	500 (1/2)**
Lodi	<20 (2/2)	14,000 (1/2)	1,000 (1/1)	600 (1/1)**	2,000 (1/3)**	3,000 (1/1)**	1,000 (1/2)**	2,000 (1/2)**	60 (1/2)**
Garfield	4,000 (1/2)	12,000 (1/2)	<500 (1/1)	500 (1/1)	4,000 (1/2)**	1,000 (1/1)**	400 (1/2)**	600 (1/2)**	100 (2/2)**
Lyndhurst	4,000 (1/4)	6,000 (1/4)	10,000 (1/2)	#1: 1,000 (1/1) #2: <500 (1/1)**	#1: 24,000 (1/2) #2: 1,000 (1/3)**	#1: NA #2: 700 (1/1)**	#1: 1,000 (1/2) #2: 500 (1/2)**	#1: 5,000 (1/2) #2: 300 (1/2)**	#1: 400 (1/2) #2: 70 (1/2)**
Englewood	2,000 (1/2)	3,000 (1/2)	700 (1/1)	NA	<500 (1/1)**	1,000 (1/1)**	300 (1/2)**	<20 (2/2)**	80 (1/2)**
Bergenfield	2,000 (1/2)	3,000 (1/2)	<500 (1/1)	1,000 (1/1)	600 (1/1)**	1,000 (1/2)**	500 (1/2)**	200 (2/2)**	300 (1/2)**
Hackensack	2,000 (1/2)	4,000 (1/2)	<500 (1/1)	2,000 (1/1)	<500 (1/1)**	1,000 (1/2)**	400 (1/2)**	100 (1/2)**	100 (1/2)**
Paramus	2,000 (1/2)	2,000 (1/2)	<300 (1/1)	100 (1/1)	700 (1/1)**	1,000 (1/2)**	200 (1/2)**	300 (1/2)**	100 (1/2)**
Fairlawn	<700 (4/4)	<800 (4/4)	<300 (1/1)	2,000 (1/2)**	3,000 (2/6)**	2,000 (2/4)**	500 (1/4)**	400 (1/4)**	80 (1/4)**
Little Ferry WPCF	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	200 (1/1)**

*Note that these dates represent date that samples were received by lab

**Composite sample results

