



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Public Health • Epidemiology Section**

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In the spring of 2003, the world was besieged with a new infectious disease threat, the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). Caused by a newly discovered Coronavirus, SARS was particularly ominous because it was spread like other community respiratory viruses yet caused pneumonia with a 10% mortality rate.

In June 2003, North Carolina reported the 8<sup>th</sup> U.S. laboratory-confirmed case of SARS in an Orange County man. Fortunately, there was no secondary transmission despite dozens of exposed healthcare workers and family members. The scenario could have easily played out differently with the disastrous consequences of community spread and spread within a healthcare facility.

In October 2003, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention presented a Draft SARS Plan. In response, the NC Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health Epidemiology Section formed an Executive Committee to adopt this Plan for use in North Carolina. The Committee was composed of State, Regional and Local Public Health and critical partners in healthcare facility infection control.

The North Carolina SARS Response Plan is a living document that is offered electronically because of the need to update information on this emerging infectious disease. As the global threat changes, so will this Plan. As vaccines or treatments become available, the Plan will be modified to incorporate new control measures.

It is the responsibility of all healthcare professionals to remain current on the threat of SARS. Our first line of defense is the patient-provider encounter and early suspicion of the diagnosis of SARS. Rapid recognition, isolation of the patient, and reporting to Public Health is the key to containment. The North Carolina SARS Response Plan is a tool to facilitate preparation and response in the event that SARS is reintroduced into our State.

Jeffrey Engel, M.D.  
Chair, SARS Executive Committee  
NC State Epidemiologist

Member Agencies of the SARS Executive Committee:  
General Communicable Disease Control Branch, Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response, State Laboratory of Public Health, HIV/STD Prevention and Care Branch, DHHS Office of Public Affairs, Orange County Health Department and Wake County Human Services, NC Public Health Regional Surveillance Teams, NC Statewide Program in Infection Control and Epidemiology, and the NC Hospital Association

