Why Report a Communicable Disease?

Public health laws in North Carolina require that 60+ general communicable diseases, Tuberculosis, HIV, AIDS, and certain sexually transmitted diseases must be reported to the local health department. These regulations specify:

1. the diseases that must be reported;
2. who is responsible for reporting;
3. what information is required on each case;
4. the time frame required to report a specific disease; and
5. control measures necessary for specific diseases.

Once a disease is reported to the program, an investigation is initiated and appropriate control measures are instituted. Timely reporting ensures that control measures are initiated early in the chain of transmission and isolated cases do not become outbreaks. Reporting of communicable diseases to the Health Department also serves to provide the data necessary to enable public health officials to make key decisions in setting priorities, allocating human and financial resources, implementing programs, and taking actions to promote and protect the public’s health.