

2026 FIFA World Cup Planning Considerations – Health & Medical

2026 FIFA World Cup Overview

Summary

- Event will run June 11-July 19, 2026
- 16 host cities across Mexico, Canada, and the US
- Match schedule announced¹
 - [42 participating teams](#) have been finalized
 - 6 remaining teams finalized March 2026
- Estimated high of 6 million attendees in the US
- Concurrent events throughout the summer (e.g., America's 250th, music and summer festivals)
- 8 matches at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey
- 6 matches at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia

New Jersey

- MetLife Stadium
 - Will be rebranded the NY/NJ Stadium
 - Location of FIFA World Cup Final on July 19
 - Stadium Capacity: 82,500 people
- Fan Festival at Liberty State Park has been cancelled and will be replaced by local watch parties / fan experiences across all 21 counties in NJ
- 4 team base camps located at Rutgers University, Stockton University, Pingry School, and Columbia Park Training Facility

Key Factors

- NJDOH will provide overarching situational awareness, guidance, and statewide operational direction.
- Local public health, healthcare and EMS providers should apply an all-hazards planning approach and ensure existing plans are reviewed and updated, as needed.
- Health and medical entities should build upon existing/routine processes and procedures (e.g. follow standard disease reporting processes) when possible, to maximize efficiency.
- LINCS Agencies, local health departments (LHDs), healthcare and EMS agencies should work with their local Offices of Emergency Management (OEMs) to:
 - Coordinate and maintain situational awareness of local, planned events (e.g., watch parties)
 - Request resources through routine channels (i.e., EMMIT requests from County OEMs)
- NJDOH will coordinate state health and medical operations at FIFA-sanctioned events or events on state property, but there will be numerous events throughout NJ that will be arranged and run by local entities.
 - FIFA-sanctioned event locations: MetLife Stadium (8 matches) and more TBD
- For questions or assistance with FIFA planning, reach out to the Division of Disaster Preparedness, Resiliency & EMS (DPREMS) at vax.operations@doh.nj.gov or your primary NJDOH contact (e.g. DLPH liaisons for LHDs).

Public Health Risks²

FIFA Characteristics	Potential Public Health Risks
Sporting events	• Energetic, potentially aggressive mood • Injuries, burns (e.g., fireworks, incendiary devices) and crowd surges • Alcohol and drug use/overdose emergencies
On-going events	• Higher risk of communicable disease spread • Extended strain on public health systems ◦ Surge in demand for testing (e.g., STI screenings) ◦ High likelihood to impact delivery of routine services (food inspections, immunization clinics, overdose prevention)
Summer activities	• Dehydration, heat stroke, heat exhaustion • Poor air quality and allergies • Mosquito/vector exposure
International attendees	• Delayed access to healthcare due to: ◦ Unfamiliarity with healthcare system

¹ Monitor FIFA websites for updates regarding [match schedules](#), [team base camps](#), and other [venues](#).

² World Health Organization (WHO). [Public Health for Mass Gatherings: Key Considerations](#).

	○ Challenges contacting and communicating with international visitors ○ Delayed reporting and communicable disease intervention due to travel/residency
International attendees (CONT.)	• Communicable disease spread among unvaccinated or vulnerable travelers • Possibility of non-endemic diseases from international travelers • Unknown immunity of attendees and players
Informal food vendors	• Increased risk of food-borne illness
Other threats at mass gatherings	• Mass casualty incidents • Terrorism (e.g., chemical or biological attacks) • Pandemic • Human trafficking • Multiple or overlapping public health emergencies happening at once ○ E.g., Managing public health risks while responding to on-going opioid epidemic

Public Health Responsibility

FIFA	• Coordinate public health and medical aspects for FIFA-sanctioned events, including health and safety permits and medical services • Support FIFA sanctioned event locations (i.e., MetLife Stadium)
NJDOH	• Lead command and control of the NJ health and medical response • Disseminate situational reports and guidance • Communicate guidance to healthcare providers and facilities • Perform enhanced disease surveillance across the state • Provide laboratory support and guidance regarding sample collection and transport • Provide oversight of health and medical services at state owned/operated sites³ • Monitor and support health and medical surge needs that exceed local capacity • Identify potential funding sources and communicate guidance to key stakeholders⁴ • Coordinate multijurisdictional outbreaks
Local Health and Medical (LINCS Agencies, LHDs, healthcare providers, EMS providers)	• Refer to Planning Checklist (pg. 3) to ensure optimal preparedness in advance • Coordinate and maintain situational awareness with local OEMs and other key local partners • Monitor established NJDOH communication channels (e.g. NJLINCS HAN, NJ Health Care Coalition notifications) • Provide on-going delivery of routine health and medical services (e.g., prehospital care, immunization clinics, overdose education and naloxone distribution, public health messaging, medical care)⁵ • Review and update all hazards plans for public health emergencies • Participate in enhanced surveillance by investigating disease reports in a timely manner and notify the Regional Epidemiology Program (REP) or relevant NJDOH contact immediately • Submit resource requests via the established emergency management system (i.e., EMMIT)
LINCS Agencies	• Coordinate preparedness and response efforts within designated county or city in accordance with the Emergency Health Powers Act (N.J.S.A. 26: 13-1 et seq) • As directed by the Commissioner, conduct disease surveillance, disseminate information, dispense/administer MCMs, and perform other response activities

³ For FIFA-sanctioned events at state owned/operated sites, NJDOH will coordinate with the FIFA NJ/NY Host Committee.

⁴ NJDOH has requested funds from the [FEMA FIFA World Cup Grant Program](#) and will advise if any funds are received. Public health and medical entities should review allowable costs for existing grant agreements and contact their NJDOH PMO with questions.

⁵ All state regulated agencies are expected to comply with established regulations unless otherwise notified by the respective regulatory agency. Agencies should consider adjusting required activities, when possible, to be completed prior to the start of the tournament. Specific questions or concerns (e.g., Specific waivers for EMS providers or agencies) should be directed to the respective regulatory agency.

Planning Checklist

GENERAL PLANNING & PREPAREDNESS

- ☐ Review emergency plans (All-hazards, hazmat, disease-specific response plans, etc.)
 - Recognize that the event will need an all-agency and all-hazards approach
 - Establish or update emergency roles and responsibilities for all staff
 - Review 24/7 notification procedures for weekend and after-hours emergencies
 - Update emergency contact lists
- ☐ Test plans, procedures, and protocols
- ☐ Review PPE needs for agency staff
- ☐ Refresh staff trainings
 - Ensure staff, including new employees, are current with all trainings required for their position, including potential surge/response roles. This may include licensure requirements, agency specific training requirements, FEMA trainings, and others.⁶
- ☐ Confirm relevant staff have needed access to electronic platforms and dashboards (e.g., CDRSS, NJIS, EpiCenter)
- ☐ Review inventory and maintain stockpile supplies⁷

COMMUNICATION

- ☐ Assess/test all available communication platforms and channels, including channels to enhance cross-jurisdictional support (e.g., LHDs should connect with other LHDs, LINCS Agencies, and local healthcare providers)
- ☐ Ensure websites are up to date
- ☐ Review and update Communications Plan, incl.:
 - Plan for increased health education and risk communication campaigns (e.g., heat safety) and potential enhanced communication needs based on situational information
- ☐ Review/establish procedures to quickly address misinformation and rumors
 - Consider accessibility of messaging for diverse populations
 - Identify jurisdictional specific sites for targeted outreach and communication
- ☐ Incorporate processes for language and translation services across all potential points of access to public health and healthcare services

LOCAL COORDINATION & PARTNERSHIPS

- ☐ Reach out to local OEM, law enforcement, community-based organizations and partners across the health and medical system to coordinate planning, preparedness, and response efforts
 - Align communication activities with local OEM and other local partners
 - Ensure preparedness plans are coordinated across local agencies
 - Plan with traditional partners (e.g. FQHCs, pharmacies, private healthcare practitioners) as well as non-traditional to understand their available resources and response capabilities
- ☐ Review, update and establish mutual aid agreements for needs that exceed individual agency capacity

HIGH CONSEQUENCE INFECTIOUS DISEASES (HCIDs)

- ☐ Review [CDC travel health notices](#) and share advisories with local partners
- ☐ Ensure relevant staff are familiar with disease reporting processes and aware of [immediately reportable](#) and high-consequence biological agents
 - Hospitals, LINCS Agencies, and LHDs should communicate with their Regional Epidemiologist regarding communicable disease concerns and preparedness
 - Report disease and outbreaks in accordance with NJAC 8:57

OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS⁸

- ☐ Review local ordinances for potential impact of public health emergencies and risk management
- ☐ Coordinate with appropriate local agency to verify availability and/or access to local cooling centers with the potential for increased demand in high-risk and population dense areas
- ☐ Review food safety protocols for mass gatherings and distribute food safety guidelines to vendors and operators, as well as refreshers for local restaurants
- ☐ Develop staffing plans for expected surge needs as well as potential surge needs should a high impact event occur (e.g. communicable disease outbreak, mass casualty incident)
- ☐ Ensure healthcare facility staff and first responders are up to date with all recommended vaccines

⁶ NJDOH will share relevant trainings/exercises through existing communication channels as they are announced.

⁷ NJDOH is not currently recommending increasing stockpiles at individual entities, including LINCS Agencies, LHDs, healthcare facilities, and EMS providers, beyond what is required by current statute or regulation. This activity should be based on statutory requirements and any additional par levels that have been established by individual entities.

⁸ Some activities are only applicable to local health departments.

Contact List

For non-urgent FIFA preparedness, state operations or general planning questions, reach out to DPREMS at Vax.Operations@doh.nj.gov or your primary NJDOH contact (e.g. DLPH liaisons for LHDs)

NJDOH Main Line	Phone: 1-800-367-6543; After Hours Contact: 609-392-2020
NJDOH Communicable Disease Services (CDS)	Phone: 609-826-5964 (M-F, 8a-5p) After Hours Contact: 609-392-2020
NJDOH Local Health Directory	Phone/Email Directory
NJDOH Public Health and Environmental Labs (PHEL)	Phone Directory
NJDOH Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS)	Phone: 609-633-7777 Email: EMS@doh.nj.gov
NJDOH Public Health and Food Protection Program	Phone: 609-826-4935 Email: phfpp@doh.nj.gov
NJDOH Regional Epidemiology Program (REP)	Phone: 609-826-5964 Email: CDS.REP.Communications@doh.nj.gov
NJDOH Vaccine Preventable Disease Program (VPDP)	Phone: (609)-826-4860

Helpful Resources

FIFA Event Information	FIFA World Cup 2026 FIFA World Cup 2026 NY/NJ FIFA World Cup 2026 Philadelphia Visit NJ FIFA World Cup
Heat Emergencies	Extreme Heat Preparedness Checklist (Heat Hub NJ) National Weather Service (Alerts) Chill Out NJ and NJ 211 (Cooling center locations) NJDOH Heat-Related Illness Data Dashboard
Chemical and Radiological Preparedness	Chemical Preparedness Handbook for Local Health Departments Radiological and Chemical Preparedness Resources
High-Consequence Infectious Diseases	National Emerging Special Pathogens Training & Education Center National Special Pathogen System Region 2 RESPTC
Screening & Investigation Tools	Travelers' Health (CDC) Measles Resources for Health Professionals (NJDOH) How to Report a Disease (NJDOH CDS) Biological and Chemical Agents of Concern Fact Sheets (Johns Hopkins) Vaccine Preventable Disease Investigation Checklist for Local Health (NJDOH)
EMS Providers/First Responder Guidance	EMS Toolbox (NJDOH) ASPR TRACIE EMS Infectious Disease Playbook, Version 2.0 Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers (VHFs) Guidance for EMS and 9-1-1 Answering Points (CDC)
Human Trafficking	NJ Coalition Against Human Trafficking Human Trafficking Webinar Series and Resources (American Hospital Association) Tip Hot Line: 855-END-NJHT or (855)-363-6548
Substance Use and Treatment	Substance Use Prevention and Treatment Resources (NJDOH) NJ Poison Control and Emergency Hotlines (NJPIES)