

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH CALL 9/15/2020



Announcements:

CMG Associates: Mental health access and support, as well as training through a program funded for LBOH by DPH. Webinars to be held in September and October, list will be sent out to everyone. One webinar on building resilience, another for diffusing tense situations, and another for anxiety under uncertain times. Anyone can log into these, free of charge for you. If you want a one-on-one conversation you have access to this service, please reach out if you would like to do this. Ron O'Connor sent out a list of the webinars last night.

Jurisdictional Issues: Questions relating to colleges, universities, and boarding schools who may have students who are traveling across jurisdictions or reporting inconsistent addresses. How do you deal with close contacts of people who fall under this category? MAVEN sent out guidance for how to respond to these circumstances. MAVEN walked through multiple case scenarios to help how to respond to these special circumstances and how to work with LBOHs across many municipalities. DPH can also help support this. MAVEN webinar and sides are posted, additionally, Friday's MAVEN webinar, 11am – 12pm, will be "open" where anyone can ask a question.

Close contacts definition with Dr. Brown: Lots of emails coming my way, may have missed some emails, apologies about this. Questions about the key principles of ensuring that someone is assigned to a jurisdiction appropriately, I will refer you to the email sent out by the MAVEN group this morning, I suspect this will also be posted on the health section. This was also discussed on the MAVEN webinar today. If you still have questions please reach out. **Question coming up frequently:** when talking about someone being within 6ft of a positive case for at least 15 min, does the 15 min have to happen in one chunk of time or could it happen in 3, 5 min periods? **A:** CDC guidance is non-existent on this. The purpose of saying within 6 ft for at least 15 min is that it provides an appropriate amount of time where you may come in contact with the droplets of an infected person. We do think it makes sense that the 15 min can be accumulated over a period of several hours. Example, if you are in a sports event, you might not be within 6ft of a person for the entire time, but over the course of the game you may be within this person for 15 min or more. We don't think these 15 min should accrue over a several day period. Over several hours, yes. Over days, not really. We don't really know the best answer for this. Also need to apply some judgement. If it's 30 seconds drifts or drabs over the course of a day, not particularly risky. But if you had contact with someone for 5 min talking face-to-face, then this can be considered a close contact. No hard and fast rule for this, but if it's a few hour period, yes definitely. If its 4-6 hours (Dr. Brown making these numbers up) then use your judgment. If it's over a course of a day or more, not needed. Happy to work through specific situations with everyone, please call the Epi line (617 983 6800) or send me an email.

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DESE Reporting Requirements for Positive Cases: Was mentioned in the weekly update yesterday. The role of the schools vs. the role of LBOH. Last week had a couple webinars. First webinar (last Thursday) was about communication and outreach at the district level. Second webinar was about the rapid response unit protocol. If a potential transmission is occurring in the schools, what does this process look like for deploying a mobile response unit at the school? Situation thresholds are in the [guidance documents](#). The COVID-19 leader, usually the nurse, will contact LBOH and have a conversation if it sounds like a possible transmission. LBOH will get on the phone with the epidemiologist on the Epi line using information at the local level, then the epidemiologist will make the determination to send out the unit. The DESE reporting requirement in no way, shape, or form replaces the information collected in MAVEN. It is our (DESE) way of knowing what's going on in the school districts across the state as we reopen and to provide technical assistance. We have set up a reporting line, 781 338 3500, only for positive cases of students and staff members. Not anything about family members or asymptomatic people. We are also still operating the Reopeningk12@mass.gov inbox. Only looking for positive cases of staff and students, no identifiable information. Questions to be asked are: Is this a positive case? DESE considers a positive case with verbal confirmation. If it's a student, what grade level? If it's a staff member, is it an educator or support staff? Name of school district, school, and contact information of the person providing the information to DESE.

Questions from emails:

Q: Release from isolation for positive COVID-19 case--confusion remains if the case should be 10 days and 72 hrs of symptom free or 10 days with 24 hours of symptom free?

A: July 18th Guidance was revised Monday (9/15) and sent out to all the schools in the Commissioner's listserv. The 3 days has been replaced with the 24 hours which is the most current and up-to date standards. If you are a positive case, it is 10 days and 24 hrs fever free without medication and improved symptoms and a close contact is 14 days. Also would like to note that in the guidance there was a discrepancy about "you must be tested" but we cannot mandate people to get tested, and now it's "should be tested" and must follow protocol.

Q: Halloween?

A: Lots of questions. We are very aware that people want answers, and we are trying to put something together for review ASAP. Looking for best practices and what others are doing. Haunted Houses—as of right now, indoor haunted houses are considered indoor performances and are not allowed in step 1 of phase 3. This is the only update about Halloween or Haunted Houses. We are aware there are different types of haunted houses, but as of right now the answer is no.

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Q: How often will MIAA evaluate the color-coded risk map when making decisions or changes about fall sports participation. If a community changes from yellow to red, are they banned from participating, or if they go from red to yellow, can they participate again?

A: No answer

Q: Wrestling or martial arts to form cohorts to allow for contact wrestling and fighting?

A: Yes, in adult amateur sports guidance.

Q: Are in-person fishing tournaments allowed?

A: Yes. Need to follow youth and adult sports guidance, including that there cannot be more than 25 people in any one area. Any weigh-ins or ceremonies at the end need to be 25 people or fewer.

Q: How does travel data inform us of risk or actions being taken?

A: Complicated question. Right now, I don't know if the travel quarantine data have shown that travelers arriving in MA have resulted in substantial number of spillover cases. Dr. Brown's point of view as an epidemiologist is that she doesn't think those data metrics are very useful. Testing trends, number of cases, and types of clusters are all more important and useful, actionable, data points. Happy to hear from somebody else that disagrees or wants to share a story or information that sheds a different light on this topic.

Q: Toys for Tots, holiday gift giving?

A: We will be looking at this. Received this question before the meeting started.

Q: Can a restaurant show a movie in the background while diners are eating?

A: This raised a larger question about sports events, the answer is that restaurants can show movies or live events in the background as long as patrons remain seated. If the restaurant wants to sell tickets or allows for standing, this becomes an event and they need to follow event standards.

Q: Valet parking?

A: Working to fix this and include in the event and restaurant standards (only in lodging now). Valet parking should be avoided unless it's necessary to accommodate guests with disabling conditions.

Q: Lack of language about cloak rooms?

A: Being developed and will be added.

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Q: Does September 7th gathering order update exempt flu clinics?

A: Flu clinics won't have to limit themselves to the indoor gathering sizes, but must practice social distancing and face coverings.

Questions from callers:

Q: Updated guidance on trick-or-treating?

A: No.

Q: Event venue that is selling alcohol and also has a food truck on the site. They claim to be exempt from gathering limits, has indoor and outdoor spaces, typically a wedding venue, are there any exemptions to the 50-person limit?

A: If they are operating as a restaurant with a retail food license, and have all the required permits, and are essentially a restaurant, they do not have a capacity limit. If they have an event, like a graduation party, wedding, etc., they have to follow the event standards.

Q: Quarantine hotels or places where people can go who can't isolate from others in their homes, are these still available? Stop the Spread, will they extend this past the 30th?

A: Yes, still available, but there are fewer now. Still one location in Everett and North Hampton, information for how to access these and eligibility is available on mass.gov. No answer about the Stop the Spread. We can talk about this on Thursday morning, these decisions are made by the Command Center.

Q: Remote Learning Enrichment Programs—LBOH could extend recreational camp permits until September 30th and this was mentioned before the RLEP came out, but this wasn't shown as an option in the RLEP document. Can this still be extended even if they don't meet internet access for example? If you have a program that is running out of a school district that also does not meet the requirements set out by the EEC, what is the role of the LBOH in assisting and approving this? Possible for all of guidance documents for Phase 3, Step 1, to have a revision date on the bottom?

A: Camp regulations only allow camps to operate until September 30th. They cannot operate as a camp after September 30th. They cannot operate as a camp under this program. Some camps want to change their business model to be able to become one of these sites, but they need to meet the requirements set under the EEC standards. If the municipality endorses it, then they technically don't need to meet the EEC standards. EEC number where people can call with questions 617 988 6600. Additional number if you want to talk to DESE with very specific questions about potential sites, 781 605 5573. Great recommendation about the dates and will take it back.

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Q: Close contact avoids their quarantine requirement. Example, we say “you are a direct contact of a case, and you need to quarantine for 12-14 days”, and they say “nope I’m not quarantining, and I have things to do and go to work.”

A: This is not meant to be taken as legal advice, but for individuals who are avoiding quarantine, the first step is to communicate why quarantine is important, and if their work needs a letter to prove that this person needs to be quarantine, this could be something you could provide. There is always the possibility of actually issuing a quarantine order to legally enforce, but the decision to do this and how it would actually happen would have to go through your legal counsel. Cheryl Sbarra will help you draft a cease and desist quarantine order. Additional info: DESE guidance on close contacts who have not taken the test. Our guidance is that those individuals stay out of school for the 14 days, similar to a close contact with a negative test.