

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH CALL 9/18/2020



Announcements:

Dates for CMG Associates webinar: Dates changed because one of the webinar dates are interfering with the MHOA conference. New flyer to be sent after today's call.

Halloween: Still working on guidance. Nothing available today.

CTC: Uptick in cases being sent over with schools opening. You can also now just send contacts to the CTC, number of health departments prefer to do their own case investigation, but the additional capacity requested is around following the contacts. Can do this the same way you would send a case over as you do in sending the case in MAVEN. We now have Care-Resource coordinators, individuals available to link cases and contacts to services in your municipalities. It can take some time to sort through resources that are needed and make sure all the dots are connected and giving people resources they need during isolation and quarantine. Local health liaisons have sent links to forms about resource coordination to local health departments. For towns that are new to using the CTC, it might be a new process for your team, and we are here to support you using the local health liaisons.

Dr. Brown: Flu vaccines, questions about materials to support schools and school nurses. We will refer people to influenza website that has materials, and additional materials are being developed with communication office. [Mass.gov/influenza](https://www.mass.gov/influenza) . If you identify things that might be missing, please let us know and we can bring this back to the team. Other questions about anecdotal reports of needle shortages, particular about pre-filled flu syringes. We investigated this with DPH and federal contacts, and right now does not appear to be a widespread shortage. CDC says there are no known shortages. I know that sometimes there may be inequities in distribution, some areas might use the resources faster than others, but distributors will work to even this out. But right now, no evidence of a true shortage. If you continue to hear concerns/issues about getting needles please let us know and we can try to track down what the problem is.

DESE: School libraries, and books checked out by students. **Q:** Lag time between rentals? **A:** Use DLS guidance (about public libraries) to respond to the question. Books and other materials should be placed in marked containers and subject to 24 hr quarantine.

Face masks for students working with speech pathologists: **Q:** Can students sit behind a plexiglass and remove their masks? **A:** Likely that kids receiving services need to use clear masks or shields, this is a pretty specialized situation and accommodations would be made to support the students. There is guidance about this in [special education guidance](#). For students who are

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH CALL 9/18/2020



hard of hearing, look to purchase clear masks or shields. Also, Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing are planning other types of resources to support this population.

Round tables with 3ft diameter: **Q:** Can students who are wearing masks sit across from each other? **A:** Yes. Minimum distance for students with a mask is three feet, so a 3ft diameter table would be acceptable.

Indoor/Outdoor gaming and recreation standards: Last we spoke, order was signed, and guidance wasn't released, but now it is updated and [uploaded online](#). Largest changes are that arcades are now allowed to be open with special restrictions and this includes pool halls and Ping-Pong. Although pool tables at restaurants as of right now are still required to be closed.

Questions from emails:

Q: Determining a close contact, is it 6ft or less for schools?

A: Regarding 6ft, it comes down to practical implementation. School staff should ensure 6ft distancing.

Q: Proposed procedure for cleaning medical room when students are dismissed?

A: Each school and district have been asked to develop their own procedure for cleaning and disinfecting since the process and procedures will vary depending on the population, age of the students, and physical plan itself.

Q: Public health nurse reaches out to school nurse to identify close contacts for a particular date, school nurse will need to know the identity of the child, are teachers supposed to know? Confidentiality issue?

A: As stated in the [department protocol for responding to COVID-19 scenarios](#), a classroom teacher does not need to be informed of the child's identify. If the public health nurse reaches out to school nurse to talk about a positive case, the school nurse will ask staff to acquire that child's classroom seating chart and will work with leadership and public health nurse to identify close contacts. Information about the name of the student does not need to be provided to classroom teacher.

Q: Are students allowed to wear gaiters for face coverings at school?

A: Students grade 2 and above require masks that cover nose and mouth at all times, with exceptions during mask and meal breaks. There will be exceptions for students with differentiating needs. If students cannot use masks, the use of a gaiter could be considered an alternative, but the schools need to make this decision at the local level to see if gaiters would be appropriate in this particular building.

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH CALL 9/18/2020



Q: Partnering with local pharmacies to vaccinate students, at the time there was a restriction in place that blocks vaccinating children 9 years and up, but any regulation to allow vaccination children ages 2 and up.

A: There was a federal public readiness and emergency preparedness act, called the PREP Act, that allows qualified pharmacy staff to vaccinate children as young as 3 years old. This Act protects pharmacists from liability. Massachusetts Board of Registration in Pharmacy regulation matches this.

Q: Swap shops, transfer stations in municipalities where people can swap items. Can these be open?

A: They are allowed as an essential service related to recycling. Local decision to open them, as long as they follow workplace standards.

Q: Status of indoor and outdoor hookah lounges?

A: No such thing as an outdoor hookah lounge, these are smoking bars, and pursuant to state law, a smoking bar can only occur in an enclosed indoor space. If there is one, it would be operating illegally. They cannot be repurposed as retail places, but if they want to become restaurants, they need to follow those regulations of being smoke free.

Q: Resident, should she allow access to landlord to show apartment to potential tenants?

A: Matter of individual contract, but there is nothing that would prohibit this in the COVID-19 regulations/order.

Q: EEE and West Nile Virus, more outdoor dining taking place because of COVID-19, if a restaurant puts up screens on the side of a tent, would they become indoor dining?

A: Majority of transmission of EEE to humans since 2000, more than 95% has happened before September 15th. Based on historic data understanding that every year is special, the risk for current infection for EEE is much lower, we are at the end of the EEE season. It's not over, it is still possible to become infected, but based on data we should be okay. WNV is different and transmission can still occur at high levels even into October. Our recommendations to wear long sleeves and use repellent still stands, we are not reducing EEE risk levels in Plymouth County and other places with higher critical risk, maybe doing this at the end of the season, but we still suggest people practice safety protocols. Indoor/outdoor dining originally was different because outdoor dining was only allowed. The differentiation between indoor/outdoor dining has been adjusted because you can do indoor dining with same requirements as outdoor dining, so if you have the tent you still have to follow dining rules.

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH CALL 9/18/2020



Questions from callers:

Q: DLS have been lifesavers, Adam answers our questions all the time. Flea markets fall under retail, but with the holiday season coming up, winter fairs would fall under retail too, or under gathering and events? Cumulative exposure, if a teacher gets close to a student withing 3-6ft, 3 times a day for 5 min intervals and if a student becomes positive, would they be considered a close contact?

A: Please email me the question about winter fairs. For cumulative exposure, the answer is probably yes. If the 15 minutes occurs in chunks of time over a several hour period, in general we would consider this to be close contacts. If each contact is less than a minute, and happens 15 times, then this is less risky in my opinion.

Q: Restaurants, order #50 allows for indoor/outdoor games, what about trivia nights? No equipment involved and having 6 people at a table. Restaurant guidance, can tents be closed off?

A: Trivia was determined to be entertainment, and at this time still not allowed. Yes, restaurants with outdoor tents can close down all 4 sides of the tent as long as it's permitted and follows other requirements of the town.

Q: Parochial schools, do they follow the same DESE guidance? Or is there different guidance? Drive-thru pumpkin patches, if cars are going in a straight line one behind the other, and if they want a pumpkin, staff can pick it out for them.

A: Pumpkin patches are allowed, and you can go in and pick your own pumpkin. It's under agrotourism standards. Along the same lines as apple picking. If people wanted to do a handoff via car, there shouldn't be a problem. Either way, wear masks, hand washing, etc. We've been working very closely with private schools since March. They've been strongly encouraged to follow the guidance, however they don't need to follow DESE guidance. We have provided technical assistance as well.

Q: How would you establish the teacher close contact without disclosing who the student is? And the teacher should abide by confidentiality. Municipal approval authority for remote enrichment learning programs, verification and background checks—DCF welfare checks, I am not familiar with this, do you have any recommendations for how we would go about doing this? But how do we tell the teachers they need to quarantine if they don't know who it is?

A: Will have to check with EEC about DCF welfare check. Also, all school buildings are collecting seating charts for every classroom within that building. This will remain in the hands of leadership, and the school nurse. A teacher will be informed that it was an individual in a classroom, but the public health nurse and school nurse will work together to identify which individual it is, so every child identified as a close contact will be receiving the same uniform

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH CALL 9/18/2020



information about “your child has come in contact with an individual in the school and has been identified as close contact, follow protocols”. Teachers will talk about this and can infer who it might be, but they will not be formally told about the child’s identity. Through case investigation, the close contacts will be identified and assessed if the teacher is a close contact.

Q: Travel restrictions, persons commuting to work and schools are exempt in Massachusetts from quarantine and testing. Corporate international headquarters in our community where people are regularly commuting from hot spots around the country. These people are exempt from quarantine and testing, can a LBOH implement stronger restrictions than the Massachusetts residents traveling for work mandate.

A: Travel quarantine does not apply to people regularly traveling to work and schools. They aren’t allowed to wander around the community, they can go to their job/schools, do that, and then go back to their place of residence. Speak to your town counsel about stronger restrictions.

Q: School nurses, can public health department communicate with school nurse to identify a positive case?

A: If this information is to control/prevent disease, then this information be shared. Things to think about: what is the smallest amount of information you can disclose to control/prevent disease? Who are you speaking to, are they familiar with confidentiality?

Q: Private weddings in rented houses, they have a big tent, bar, catering, is this considered an event? How would we enforce the rules on this?

A: Private wedding in a private wedding backyard is an event and must follow the event standards.