

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH CALL 10/20/2020



Announcements:

Media requests: If you received this request, it should go to your city or town RAO—Records Access Officer. Each city/town is required to designate one person to be the RAO. Usually the town/city clerk's office. Also let town counsel know about this. Public Records Law does not require a town to create records that do not exist.

Changes to metrics, community map: Some communities have mentioned they have a lot cases from a LTCF or an institution. Communities will have an asterisk* if a single institution has more than 10 cases over the last 14 days or more than 30% of the cases affiliated with the community are coming from the institution. This does not make changes for how to move between steps.

Restaurants and cleaning: Previous requirement that a business with a positive case needs to be closed for 24 hours is no longer applicable. They only need to be closed as long as it takes to do a deep clean. Shared drinks, such as scorpion bowls, are not allowed. Also, wine tasting is not allowed in a retail setting. Reason being is that you cannot drink the beverage in the retail setting because you need to wear a mask. Self-serve drinks at Cumby's for example are different because you aren't going to drink the drink in the store.

Switching platforms for these weekly calls: Goal date is October 27th to have our calls be webinar style using WebEx. Still a number for people to call in, but this will allow us to share information visually because a lot of these topics are complicated, and we think visual aides would be helpful. New invitations to be sent out to local health.

Questions from emails:

Q: Is mask order enforceable at a political rally? If so, should LBOH try to enforce it?

A: This is complicated, depending on the nature of the demonstration. We look at the past, and what we can do to avoid inciting additional issues. Any enhanced enforcement by law enforcement could inadvertently set off additional protests. We are advising law enforcement to not enforce additional or any masking orders at all for the time being.

Q: Walk-in clinics touting rapid antigen tests as quick and inexpensive. Individuals are not following up with PCR, so lots of probable cases showing up in our town. We can't send them to CTC, we are trying really hard to support vulnerable populations by keeping their cases but we are being burdened by these probables. We would like to send these probable cases to CTC.

A: PCR is still the gold standard and unfortunately, we cannot make people take the PCR test after the rapid antigen test. Next MAVEN update in November will include enabling you to send probable cases to the CTC.

Q: If a person has had COVID-19 and are immune, can they transmit the virus to others?

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A: Based on what we know right now, no. Reasons why we have people isolate for 10 days is because they can transmit the virus for around 9 days following symptom onset. But you might see some people coming back with positive tests due to shedding of viral RNA, and right now, we don't really know what immunity looks like for COVID-19. We are relatively confident that people do not get reinfected for at least 3 months after the initial case.

Q: New daily confirmed case numbers have increased a lot since the summer, but the hospital stays and deaths have remained steady since the summer, why?

A: Yes, this is true. Despite the fact that cases are increasing, we are not seeing the same increase in hospitalizations or deaths. The reason for this is because the cases that are occurring now are primarily individuals that are younger compared to those in March, April, and May.

Q: Partnership with school nurses and LBOH? There was an issue when a case was relayed directly to superintendent's office that was not confirmed with LBOH, then this was shared with the school community, and then this became a problem between the school district and the LBOH. Should school nurses be releasing any information to school administration?

A: In updated guidance for [protocols for responding to COVID-19](#) scenarios in schools, the recommendation is that each school/school district have a dedicated point person as a COVID-19 school lead that will be working directly with LBOH. Nurses should not be releasing identifiable information, but this should be pre-determined in the local developed procedures and protocols.

Q: If a farm hosts a trick-or-treat event, does it follow outdoor recreation guidance and thus not limited to 100 participants?

A: The event is still an outdoor event, and this means they still have to follow outdoor events/venues guidelines and are also subject to ecotourism guidance, which primarily requires everyone to be socially distanced.

Questions from callers:

Q: Are there any districts in MA with in-person learning who are using 3 ft of physical distancing as opposed to 6 ft of physical distancing?

A: No data that answers this question right now, but can follow up with you directly after this.

Q: What information is the media looking for that isn't already available online or any other resource?

A: Some people are directing the media to the DESE site to see the school data themselves. We think the media want the information nicely laid out for them and not have to go through the data.

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Q: Preponderance of cases and infections are occurring in the home. If this is true, from where are they coming? Also, has DPH given any thought to reverse contact tracing?

A: Yes, we can link 30-35% of cases to household transmission. Transmission, no matter where it starts, spills over into other parts of our lives. If there's transmission in the household, someone brought it in from somewhere. And people in the household who do not know they are positive might spread it around school or work or parties. But, around 50% of cases right now we cannot track where they have gotten infected, and we call this community transmission. Some proportion, and maybe a significant proportion is not recognized as another cluster. About reverse contact tracing, yes, we are shifting out attention to this and so are other states. We need to know where and how infections are occurring to create targeted messaging or create other interventions that might be helpful. Changes in MAVEN next month will also include new questions that will begin to get to some of this. Also, the CTC will start doing this backwards tracing on a couple high profile areas/settings that we are concerned about, ice hockey being one of them.

Q: DPH message to MA youth sports leagues, specifically the leagues who do not have a school district or town affiliation. Multiple complaints because its regional and our area is tri-state, NH, VT, and MA. Biggest concerns are soccer and basketball.

A: In NH, they've [cancelled hockey activities](#) for about 2 weeks, but we don't have a list of leagues for who to contact for leagues not in school districts or affiliated with towns.

Q: Food establishment wants to reopen just for pick-up, online orders, no seating, but people coming through. What is the best guidance for them to use in terms of occupancy, restaurant guidance or retail guidance?

A: Restaurants such as this would still follow restaurant guidance. Have people spread out 6 ft or more when they are waiting for pick up.

Q: Detailing vehicles, is this allowed? What precautions need to be taken?

A: Nothing against it, but this is a good question. Car washes are allowed in sector specific standards so detailing probably is.

Q: Notification and how much can be shared per HIPAA rules--for LBOH rules were cut and dry and now in the schools everyone feels like they need to know.

A: Take this offline and to bring back on a future call.