

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH WEBINAR 11/10/2020



Inter-agency Staff on the Webinar

- Jana Ferguson, Assistant Commissioner, DPH
- Ron O'Connor, Office of Local and Regional Health, DPH
- Dr. Catherine Brown, Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences, DPH
- Anne Gilligan, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Michael Flanagan, Mary Dozois, and Adam Kinney, Department of Labor Standards
- Alvina Brevard, Department of Housing and Community Development
- Cheryl Sbarra, Massachusetts Association of Health Boards

Announcements:

CTC: working to adjust their protocol to scale up their hiring and staffing to manage the surge. Bringing on a few hundred people / week. They might be a delay in following up with cases, reach out to your local health liaison if you have any questions.

COVID-19 [Order No. 56](#): revises provisions for Phase 3 re-opening in municipalities with reduced incidence of COVID-19 Infection, advancement of lower risk communities to Phase 3 step 2, requirements of continuing lower risk status, and COVID-19 workplace safety rules for step 3 of Phase 3.

Updated metrics: A lot of these decisions happen at the COVID-19 Command Center and Governor's Office. DPH has some input, but the majority of the decisions are made by the aforementioned groups. These metrics make sense, but they are a bit more complicated. Lots of questions about why this was created: bring our metrics more in line with what other jurisdictions are doing (Massachusetts was very conservative compared to metrics put out by CDC and WHO) and to get kids in schools. Calculation: average daily incidence calculation remains the same. For LHDs to calculate % positivity rate requires information about total tests in your community, and this can be challenging because MAVEN does not allow LHDs to pull reports about total tests because it would crash the system. In discussions to make this data available to LHDs. Risk map and table: map is not being produced any more and interactive version no longer on the website, there was some concern about visualizing communities by color. Asterisks are also no longer being used. Will discuss including color in the % positivity column. **Q:** Do new metrics suggest that % positive rate is not important in small towns? **A:** Still important, but in small communities (<10k people), a single case can dramatically impact % positivity rate without substantially indicating there has been an increase in COVID-19 transmission.

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CITY & TOWN METRICS

Population			
Group	Under 10k	10k - 50k	Over 50k
Grey	Less than or equal to 10 total cases	Less than or equal to 10 total cases	Less than or equal to 15 total cases
Green	Less than or equal to 15 total cases	<10 avg cases/100k AND >10 total cases	<10 avg cases/100k AND >15 total cases
Yellow	Less than or equal to 25 total cases	≥10 avg cases/100k OR ≥5% pos rate	≥10 avg cases/100k OR ≥4% pos rate
Red	More than 25 total cases	≥10 avg cases/100k AND ≥5% pos rate	≥10 avg cases/100k AND ≥4% pos rate

PrepMod update: DPH has been in the process of procuring and customizing PrepMod for use by LHDs and other public immunization providers this flu season. PrepMod system will not be ready for use by the majority of LHDs this flu season. Challenges—technical set up and customizations have been more complicated than originally anticipated, legal contracting and privacy issues still need to be resolved. DPH anticipates that PrepMod will be fully live and operational by early December in anticipation that it could still be pilot tested by some LHDs this fall.

DLS: [Order 55](#)-face coverings (most of this information has been mentioned in previous calls, but they reviewed it again) “new” requirements: must wear coverings in all public locations even if no one is closer than 6ft; when carpooling with non-household members; in all locations that host indoor/outdoor events or performances; employers can require documentation from employees who request an accommodation (but not customers, businesses can deny entry to someone who refuses to wear a mask for non-medical reasons); school can require documentation from employees and students. Note: any sector guidance that permits the removal of a face overing under certain circumstances still applies (e.g. removing it at a restaurant while eating, removing it at the gym during strenuous fitness activity with appropriate distancing.) Law enforcement is not exempted from having to wear a mask.

Town committees and boards: face covering required by all in attendance, including committee members, and even if persons are more than 6 ft apart. Audibility—face covering may be pulled down by a committee member who is speaking and audience has indicated difficulty understanding them. The face covering must be replaced immediately after the

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person has completed speaking. Barriers are recommended. Distancing is required, all persons must be at least 6 feet apart. Occupancy—no more than 25 people for board and committee meetings (indoor event standard—this gathering limit does not apply to a legislative body). Occupancy counts in all cases must include all attendees, but may exclude event staff or other workers.

[Order 53](#)-*mandatory closing period*: Close premises to the public between 9:30 pm – 5:00 am. May keep businesses open for employees as long as customers and the public are not admitted. Does not apply to retail, also the term “essential business” is no longer used. A business can no longer claim that their employee is an essential worker and does not need to quarantine. Retail stores can sell anything to in-person customer (food, gas, clothes, furniture, hardware, candles, candy etc.) except for alcohol or cannabis.

- Mandatory closing hours affect the following: Restaurants, arcade and indoor/outdoor recreation, indoor/outdoor events, theatres/performance venues/movie theatres (indoor and outdoor), drive-ins, youth and amateur sports, outdoor recreation, golf, recreational boating and boating businesses, outdoor recreational experiences and educational activities, casino, horse racing tracks, and simulcast facilities, driving and flight schools, zoos/botanical gardens/wildlife reserves/nature centers, close contact personal services, fitness centers and health clubs, indoor and outdoor pools, museums/cultural & historical facilities/guided tours. Fitness centers need to be staffed to clean equipment between uses, so it is absolutely not acceptable to have unsupervised fitness centers.
- Mandatory closing hours *does not* affect the following: Manufacturing, office, construction, cleaning (sanitation and housekeeping services), Mass Pike rest stops (but restaurants are take-out only after 9:30 pm), transportation (public transit, taxi, rideshare), warehouse (such as Amazon), employees conducting work functions in the sectors that are required to close at 9:30 pm as long as customers are not allowed in-person into the premises, the Stay at Home Advisory people who need to go to/from work between the hours of 10 pm – 5am.
- Restaurant rules to mandatory closing time (9:30 pm – 5:00 am): patrons may not be admitted, except for takeout. Food and beverages cannot be served after 9:30 pm, except takeout. Table service customers seated before the start of the mandatory closing period may remain at the table to finish any food and beverages that have been ordered and served to them before 9:30 pm. Table service customers must exit the premises by 10:00 pm regardless of the state of their meal. No restaurant may sell or provide alcohol of any kind during mandatory closing. Events, performances, and other activities must all be concluded and participants must disperse by 9:30 pm. Restaurants may permit employees to stay on the premises during the mandatory closing period, from 9:30 pm – 5:00 am. Ex. Employees cleaning up, or coming into the morning for

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donuts, whatever needs to do be done before opening as long as its limited to just the employees. Restaurants include: social clubs, college cafeterias, food courts (e.g. malls) must all close seating areas.

- Alcohol and cannabis sales: NOT a ban on all alcohol in the state, it's a reduction of hours. Restaurant or retail does not have to close, just has to stop alcohol and cannabis sales, sales are permitted as usual before 9:30 pm with a license, "take-out" alcohol or cannabis is now allowed after 9:30 pm, delivery of alcohol is not allowed after 9:30 pm, medical marijuana sales may continue past 9:30 pm.
- Religious services may occur during mandatory closing period, such as religious support group meetings, religious study groups, and other religious related gatherings are allowed after 9:30 pm. These meetings are limited to 25 people. Church conferences, fundraisers, private functions, wedding parties or wakes after the ceremony, scout groups, or community groups that use or rent the premises are required to follow the [Indoor/Outdoor Event Standard](#). These events are limited to the 25-person gathering limit indoors, or 10 persons per 1000 sq. ft.

[Order No. 54-Gatherings](#): Members of same household, when assembled together with no other non-household members present, do not constitute a gathering and are not subject to the capacity limit. Workers and staff present to provide services to participants shall not count towards the capacity limits in the gathering order.

- House rental parties: Indoor gathering at a private residence, hotel room, or Airbnb rental is limited to a maximum of 10 people. Additionally, all participants must maintain at least 6 ft distance from every other participant, except where the participants are members of the same household. The gathering violates Order 54 if it is not reasonably possible for all participants to maintain distancing. Rental of lodging is not restricted to persons from the same household. Operators of unstaffed individual lodging units are required to comply with hygiene standards of the ["Operators of Lodging"](#) standard.
- Indoor max of 25 people does not apply to any sector with its own capacity limit (use 50% of 10 persons per 1,000 sq.ft): Manufacturing, office, movie theatre/performance venue, warehouse such as Amazon, Place of Worship, restaurant seating (but an event held at a restaurant is limited to 25), indoor recreation (bowling, arcade, darts, etc.)
- Contact tracing: A business cannot claim that "close contacts" are too essential to quarantine. If an event host or venue is notified that an attendee or worker tested positive for COVID-19, the event host or venue is to immediately notify LBOH in the city or town the event took place. They must assist the DPH and LBOH with contact tracing efforts and investigation.

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Eviction Diversion Initiative (EDI): Rapid Rehousing Rental Assistance: consists of several rental assistant funding sources: Residential Assistance for Family in Transition (RAFT)-primarily for families with children younger than 21 and pregnant women, Emergency Rent and Mortgage Assistance (ERMA)—for those above 50% of Area Median Income (AMI), Strategic Prevention Initiative (SPI), Massachusetts Emergency Transitional Assistance Reserve (METAR), and Home BASE. For a family to be eligible for these programs they are required to submit an emergency assistance application with Department of Housing and Community Development. They can be approved for rent funds or to be shifted to shelter. The goals of these programs are to assist families and individuals pre-eviction, while they are in the eviction process.

EDI started a [public information campaign in 7 languages](#), also contains information about referencing legal services regarding a Notice to Quit.

[Isolation and recovery sites](#)—people can access these sites by calling 617-367-5150. Transportation is provided free of charge, and covers transportation to the nearest site and back to the individual's home community. MEMA is exploring additional sites across the state where demand presents. Daily calls with the Command Center to leverage state government leadership with increasing shelter capacity in communities.

Q: Will there be testing available at shelter sites?

A: The state does not provide on-site testing at shelter sites, though some local boards of health do provide on-site testing.

Q: How does LPH/LBOH access services for homeless individuals or families or if they have urgent questions?

A: 211 is currently the best resource for general questions about housing and homelessness, and can help connect callers with the appropriate resources. Families experiencing homelessness, refer directly to DHCD for Emergency Shelter intake line at 866-584-0653.

Questions from emails:

Q: Our school staff is asking about the new Active Cluster by exposure report in the weekly public health report (pg. 38). It lists 18 school clusters. Staff are concerned. Was this all in-school transmission? Was it just among staff? Were students involved? What district, etc.?

A: Clusters are created when there are multiple cases linked to a particular setting. Not always able to determine where the transmission happened, but when multiple people at a single school test positive within 2 weeks of each other, this is considered a cluster. Some of it is likely to be in-school transmission, and we certainly have seen more documented clusters among staff in school, there have been students involved, but from DPH's standpoint we do not report these out, this is [DESE's report](#).

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Questions from attendees in Q&A box:

Amanda Glaser - 3:32 PM

Q: Why do people on a rail trail/bike trail have to wear a mask while in constant motion outside yet gyms are still allowed to have high intensity classes in an enclosed space without masks just because they are 14 feet?

-Mike Coughlin - 3:37 PM

A: Apologies. previous was meant for another attendee

Kristel Bennett - 3:24 PM

Q: Under the revised Order 55 - are face coverings required in gyms and fitness clubs when equipment is 14 or more feet apart?

-Michael Flanagan - 3:44 PM

A: No, the requirements in the Fitness Center standard would still apply.

Camille Griffin - 3:25 PM

Q: Are common areas in apartment and condo complexes considered a "public location", subject to order 55? - Framingham-

-Michael Flanagan - 3:44 PM

A: Yes

Kristel Bennett - 3:26 PM

Q: Under Order 55, can gyms or fitness centers require documentation for patrons in gyms or fitness centers/clubs that are medically exempt from wearing a face covering.

-Michael Flanagan - 3:45 PM

A: No, there is not an allowance to require customers to document a medical reason to not wear a face covering.

Jeff Paster - 3:41 PM

Q: Businesses are required to maintain a list of all guests in order to comply with LBOH contract tracing, including name, phone and address, correct?

-Mike Coughlin - 3:45 PM

A: yes Jeff. Mike C

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Derek Kwok - 3:26 PM

Q: Would gatherings at an apartment's common area (outside bbq area or interior common rooms) fall under gathering limits for private residences or a public setting?

-Michael Flanagan - 3:45 PM

A: Public setting

Kelli Calo - 3:38 PM

Q: Our town moderator would not like to wear a mask for our upcoming town meeting.. he will have a microphone, so I don't think that he would be exempt. Am I misreading this?

-Michael Flanagan - 3:48 PM

A: He would not be exempt.

Heather Gallant - 3:42 PM

Q: Is the removal of the "essential business" term in writing somewhere? I am having an issue with a particular business. Thank you.

-Michael Flanagan - 3:50 PM

A: No, the Order containing it expired.

Grace Peladeau - 3:42 PM

Q: where do i find these "orders"?

-Michael Flanagan - 3:50 PM

A: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-state-of-emergency->

Nicole Chauncey - 3:12 PM

Q: Hi from Lowell! I am looking for clarification on who governs the re-opening of charter schools. I thought I read in a recent order that schools need PH approval to open, but I can't find the guidance. Is this true/if so who would approve charters?

-Anne Gilligan - 3:53 PM

A: Charter Schools are public schools. They need to follow the same guidance and protocols as your public school district.

Dr. Marcia Herzberg - 3:44 PM

Q: We got a call about construction workers not wearing masks reportedly closer than 6 ft apart. On the web it says PPE is to be provided but not that it must be worn. Is it mandatory?

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-Michael Flanagan - 3:53 PM

A: Yes, it should be worn as well any time they are 6 feet or less apart.

Vaira Harik - 3:57 PM

Q: That was a question for Alvina-

-Mike Coughlin - 3:58 PM

A: I'll send it to her after webinar.

Additional questions please email: Michael.j.coughlin@mass.gov

