

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH WEBINAR 11/13/2020



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
- Helene Bettencourt and Anne Gilligan, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Michael Flanagan, Mary Dozois, and Adam Kinney, Department of Labor Standards
- Gerben Scherpier and Sarah Wallach, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
- Cheryl Sbarra, Massachusetts Association of Health Boards
- Chief Jeff Farnsworth, Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association
- John Welch and Jason Lefferts, Community Tracing Collaborative

Announcements:

Travel quarantine texting change: Travelers that submit Travel Forms indicating they are arriving from somewhere out of state not designated as low risk have been receiving daily reminder text messages during their trip in MA. These texts remind them of the Travel Order rules that require them to quarantine for 14 days unless they have a negative test result. Starting 11/13 the daily reminder texts will be retired. Travelers will still get a confirmation email when they submit their Travel Forms, but won't get daily reminders to phone. No change to Travel Order or Travel Quarantine requirements. Text related reporting available to LBOH on the CTC's SharePoint site will change slightly in early December to no longer include text message metrics. Effective 11/14, NY, Washington State, and Washington D.C. added to list of states not considered lower-risk. Maine and NH are in "red" and trending upward, but we look at two weeks of data.

Updated Youth and Adult Amateur Sports Standards/Interstate Hockey: Facial coverings not required to be worn while engaged in lower risk sports activity when participants can consistently maintain at least 14 ft distance from each other throughout the duration of the play (e.g. singles tennis, when XC runners are more than 14 ft apart, solo gymnastics). This does not include a goalie on a soccer field because they are not playing a lower-risk sport.

No out-of-state teams are allowed to play at MA facilities. Out-of-state border athletes or coaches are subject to the Travel Order. An individual athlete from a border state that plays on a Mass based team is subject to the Travel Order. Any player who comes into the state from a non-low-risk state has to either quarantine or test every time the player enters MA. Clarifications—there are no exemptions from Travel Order for volunteer sports

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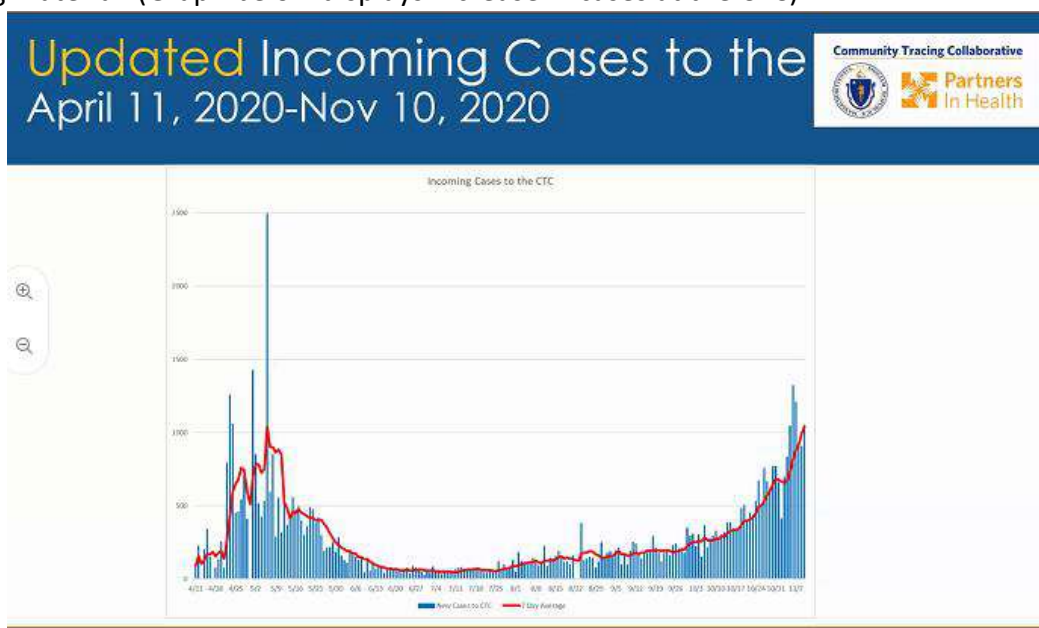
activities/coaching. A student from another state being educated in MA can participant in school-affiliated sports in MA, but only school affiliated.

If anyone affiliated with the team does not comply with Travel Order, the team or individual risks suspension. If a MA team player or coach travels to a non-lower-risk state they must test negative or quarantine when they come back to MA before they can return to work or school. The Activity Organizer must ensure every player complies with Travel Order.

Interstate competitions for public and private schools and youth hockey in 7 states suspended effective this Saturday through a minimum of December 31. Interstate collegiate, professional, or U.S. national team hockey activities will remain subject to existing health and safety protocols / restrictions. States will assess the need for continued restrictions on sports activities based on public health data.

DLS: For referrals please use: 508-616-0461 x9488, safepublicworkplacemailbox@mass.gov. Both are monitored by DLS employees, more efficient than providing individual phone or email.

CTC: Higher caseload requires additional outreach to encourage positive cases to answer the call and support contact tracing efforts. Immediate-term activities will focus on communities with higher caseload. Existing material will be targeted through social media and CEIT (COVID-19 Enforcement and Intervention Team) outreach teams. Ethnic media with bi-lingual contact tracers will be pursued. First communities: Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Framingham, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Pittsfield, Revere, Springfield, Winthrop, and Worcester. Long-term activities will expand the footprint and include fresh messaging. Also in development is a new mass.gov webpage that offers advance tips on isolation and quarantine, with links to other existing material. (Graph below displays increase in cases at the CTC)



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Q: When will CTC be able to take antigen positive cases?

A: Dr. Brown anticipates to make the changes to MAVEN to send probable cases (antigen positives) to CTC by December.

Q: Have you ever thought of assigning specific contact tracers to each municipality, so they can get to know the LBOH?

A: We do have our Care Resource Coordinators who work closely with people in specific communities. We also have Local Health Liaisons (LHL) assigned to each individual town across MA, and this will serve as the connection back to the community, and this is always available to LBOH and contact tracers/investigators.

Q: Why is the CTC not taking new cases?

A: We are taking cases sent to us through MAVEN (COVID-19 Assistance Requested). If this hasn't happened, there are a few specific exclusions, if there is a particular case that hasn't come over, reach out to MAVEN helpdesk and see why, or reach out to LHL to look at MAVEN and see why a case wasn't sent out. Most common reason is that the record has been excluded and CTC can take a look and have that case moved over, but we are still taking cases.

Q: CTC current response time for new cases. Should you be hiring a part-time nurse, or does CTC have the capacity to work with the surge?

A: Twice a day records being sent to us from MAVEN. Definitely working through the surge, and we are experiencing some delays right now, and we are hiring up to try to meet this. If individual municipalities are thinking about adding capacity there, this could help each individual town but decisions like this are made on an individual basis of course. If there are specific questions about a specific case, reach out to LHL. Earlier this year when cases were quite low, we were able to get to things almost immediately, but now it does take time to go through each case sent to us.

Questions from emails:

Q: Are healthcare workers or first responders now required to quarantine as a close contact given the discontinuation of the designation of essential workers?

A: At this point, healthcare personnel are still able to work after being designated a close contact as long as they are asymptomatic and masked at all times. For other sectors, refer to the sector specific guidance that is appropriate for those workers.

Q: Is testing of asymptomatic people (not close contact) recommended? With limited resources, what are your thoughts on how this could be funded/sustained, is there any guidance on how to run a testing program?

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A: Testing should be prioritized to anyone with mild symptoms or identified as a close contact, but it is true that because there are so many people who are asymptomatic, there are good reasons to have capacity to test asymptomatic people, for example they are taking public transport. Funding and sustainability, something we are struggling with at the state level and there are some resources at the command center to run a testing program.

Q: Are there recommendations for routine random testing in schools and acute care hospital settings?

A: Complicated question, general move to test individuals as they enter the hospital setting. For schools, there is a program in the works ready to be deployed in December, collaboration between DESE and DPH where schools can request and utilize BinaxNOW antigen tests. Some school districts are setting up surveillance testing processes, but there are costs and logistical complications associated with all of this. These aren't bad ideas at all, but there is a lot that goes into the decisions about surveillance testing being appropriate in any setting.

Q: Current standard for construction sites and face covering requirements?

A: Standard is to wear masks, and law enforcement will also be masked. Between yesterday and today, every police officer across the state will receive masks and we are pushing out that everyone should be wearing them even on detail outside.

Q: Would an outdoor fitness class in a park fall under fitness standards or another standard, and should all participants wear a mask the whole time?

A: If they are at a park, they are in a public setting and would need to maintain their face coverings the entire time even if participants could spread out 14 ft or more, we don't know if a passerby can cross over to be less than 14 ft.

Q: Why are non-food/pharmacy retailers allowed to be open after 10:00 pm especially if people are not meant to be going out to them?

A: Not a lot of retailers open after 10, and this is a Stay at Home advisory, not a curfew, meant to encourage people to stay at home from 10 pm – 5:00 am.

Q: Do golfers have to wear a mask out on the course?

A: Golf facilities fall under DLS, and golf standard was changed recently, but the masking portion was not one of the changes. Face coverings are required at all times on the course, driving range, or putting green.

Q: Is a private school student from NH allowed to play for teams in MA under MA rules?

A: If the student is commuting to MA for school, allowed to play with that school team, but not allowed to come to play with a private team.

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Q: If students travel out of MA to play moderate/high-risk sport (hockey, basketball, football, etc) then they would need to quarantine and test to return to school, does this not matter if they travel to NH/Maine or any non-restricted state, correct?

A: Hockey order no travel at all. And NH/Maine are going in a direction of potentially becoming a high-risk state.

Q: Can high school football now play tackle?

A: Yes, can play tackle football and players must wear a face covering the entire time.

Q: Can you tell us the status of racquetball? Is it high risk and still limited to level 2 because it's played indoors?

A: Moderate risk (*I could have heard this incorrectly*), and face coverings in use at all times.

Q: Children under 10, what is required of them when traveling outside of MA and can schools require them to be tested?

A: Children under 10 are exempted from the travel requirement, and should do what their grown-ups do. Schools cannot require children to be tested. This answer is not on FAQ, simplistic phrasing, but this is the rule for kids under the age of 10.

Questions from attendees in Q&A box:

Q: Guidance for masks in outdoor smoking areas? Are smoking areas even allowed under new guidance and standards?

A: Do not have the answer for this at the moment, hopefully have an answer by Tuesdays call.

Q: When citing businesses for non-compliance of sector specific standards, what is the best order number to issue them a ticket under?

A: Can reference specific standard or reference the most current order is No. 56. Phase 3, Step 1 is Order No. [43](#). There is a [template](#) on MHAB's website and refer to sector specific workplace standards as well.

Q: Clarify, exemption from quarantine for outdoor workers or DPW workers? Are they still essential workers and allowed to break quarantine to do essential outdoor work?

A: DLS' perspective, there was never a thing as an essential worker, only essential businesses. As far as quarantine goes, DLS does not handle this and cannot speak to this for when people are allowed to break or stay in quarantine.

Q: If a hockey player test positive, does the entire team need to quarantine?

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A: Sports are complicated. We had conversations about this last night. Our recommendations at this point are that ice hockey have clearly been identified as high risk and whole teams should quarantine. Other sports in outdoor settings, there have been outbreaks but it's a little less compelling and are leaning more towards identifying close contacts and then doing quarantine. This is all situation dependent, and as sports move indoors, this general approach may change as we learn more. If you have specific questions/concerns about a certain situation reach out to 24/7 EPI line (617-983-6800) and there are sports experts on there.

Q: State looking into other sports besides hockey to stop play? Are we seeing an increase in cases associated with soccer as we are with hockey?

A: We have seen cases in other sports settings, basketball is the one we have seen more cases in recently, and soccer and baseball a little bit less. Stressing to everyone that anywhere people are having human-to-human interaction is at risk for transmission. Every sport, besides solo long-distance running has a risk of transmission. We have to think about the specific situation, how much interaction happens, was it indoors or outdoors? We will keep you updated as we learn and continue to move forward.

Trey Hassan - 9:06 AM

Q: played but in the tournaments guidance it states that kind of play is not allowed. Also, would a tournament be based off one facility or multiple facilities? For instance, if you play on game at one court, then go to another court to play your next game.

-Gerben Scherpbier - 9:08 AM

A: Hi Trey, it appears that some of your question was cut off-- could you try entering it again? You may need to separate it into 2 questions if the character limit is reached.

Trey Hassan - 9:10 AM

Q: Board of Health are looking for clarification on sports tournaments vs competitions. We are confused because in the sports guidance they allow for back to back games to be played but in the tournaments guidance it states that kind of play is not allowed.

-Gerben Scherpbier - 9:20 AM

A: Thanks Trey, the updated guidance allows for a team to play 2 competitions in a single day provided that the games are played back-to-back at the same facility. Anything beyond this would be defined as a tournament.

Trey Hassan - 9:10 AM

Q: Also, would a tournament be based off one facility or multiple facilities? For instance, if you play one game at one court, then go to another court to play your next game.

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-Gerben Scherpbier - 9:21 AM

A: They would need to be played at the same facility, but if that facility has multiple courts/fields the team can play on a different court.

Erin Hightower - 9:15 AM

Q: Our town basketball association sent an email stating that they are 'soon' able to start games and scrimmages. I am not seeing this in the new order and still see basketball listed as a high risk sport in level 1 and 2. Is this correct?

-Gerben Scherpbier - 9:22 AM

A: Thanks Erin, the updated guidance does still list basketball as a higher risk sport, but allows for basketball to be practiced and competitions to be played. All players are required to wear face coverings at all times.

Rachel Lee - 9:16 AM

Q: Is there a new guideline that outdoor flag football team players do not have to quarantine if there was a + Covid player during game due to reduced risk? Wenham PHN received epi phone call about this, but clarification and official guidance is appreciated.

-Gerben Scherpbier - 9:24 AM

A: Thanks for the question Rachel. The EEA Sports guidance doesn't go into who is classified as a close contact. Perhaps DPH is able to weigh in on this.

Krisitn Kennedy - 9:09 AM

Q: When will CTC be able to take Antigen positive cases?

-Mike Coughlin - 9:26 AM

A: This question has been answered verbally.

Kelli Calo - 9:24 AM

Q: Have you ever thought about assigning specific contact tracers to each municipality? That way, they can get to know the community and the LBOH. Right now, it's kind of a broken system...-

-Ron O'Connor - 9:27 AM

A: This question has been answered verbally.

-Mike Coughlin - 9:28 AM

A: This question has been answered verbally.

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James Philbrook - 9:03 AM

Q: Jana, we are almost to the point that we are going to recommend to the schools that they go full remote due to the issues with cases in schools that cause chaos. Raising the white flag! Why is the CTC not taking new cases ?-

-Mike Coughlin - 9:28 AM

A: This question has been answered verbally.

James Abare - 9:27 AM

Q: A New Hampshire college hockey team uses a Massachusetts private high school ice rink for games and practice. Would this be allowed under the current regulations? -

-Gerben Scherpbier - 9:34 AM

A: Good question James, this is being discussed right now, but I don't have an answer at this point. I will try to get clarification ASAP.

Kristin Black - 9:09 AM

Q: What is CTC's current response time for new cases? Given the increase in cases, is it best we try to handle cases in house or can we expect faster response from CTC? Can CTC keep up with the surge or should we be hiring part-time nurse for the winter.

-Ron O'Connor - 9:35 AM

A: This question has been answered verbally.

Sharon Cameron - 9:37 AM

Q: There is no sector-specific guidance for first responders.....right?

-Michael Flanagan - 9:39 AM

A: That is correct. Healthcare in general is covered by other guidance issued by the Governor and DPH.

KATHLEEN WALDRON - 9:10 AM

Q: I apologize, because I think you already went over this. But can someone clarify what is required for children under 10 traveling/returning to MA? Can the schools require them to be tested?

-Mike Coughlin - 9:52 AM

A: This question has been answered verbally.

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James Philbrook - 9:51 AM

Q: Can a gymnastics studio allow CT residents to participate? It is not organized sports as defined.

-Gerben Scherpbier - 9:53 AM

A: They would need to meet the conditions of the Travel Order.

michael mendez - 9:44 AM

Q: When citing businesses for non-compliance of sector specific standards, what is the best order number to issue them a ticket under? -

-Mike Coughlin - 9:54 AM

A: This question has been answered verbally.

wendy machmuller - 9:44 AM

Q: That answer by the chief would be very helpful if it could be in writing., so that we can point to it and not get pushback-

-Jeff Farnsworth - 9:57 AM

A: There is a memo being sent to all the Chief's this afternoon regarding masking, I will share it with this group during the next call.

Emily Amico - 9:59 AM

Q: Can you please repost the slide with the DLS contact info

-Mike Coughlin - 9:59 AM

A: slides will be sent out later today.

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