

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH WEBINAR 11/17/2020



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, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
- Cheryl Sbarra, Massachusetts Association of Health Boards
- Chief Jeff Farnsworth, Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association

Announcements:

COVID-19 vaccine update: Vaccine rolled out in phases starting in late December and going into spring/summer. Vaccine for LHDs for large public clinics probably not available until phases 3 & 4 (general population). LBOHs will get vaccine for phases 3&4 to hold large clinics as needed. More details in coming months as more information is known. COVID-19 vaccine, Pejman Talebian will be on the call next Tuesday to talk more about this.

BinaxNOW COVID-19 Testing (DESE): Sent out notifications last month for volunteers to participate in the BinaxNOW antigen testing, significant response (~300). Yesterday Russell Johnston emailed out notifications to over 100 districts who will be participating in Phase 1 of the pilot. If your district expressed interest and did not receive an email, stay tuned and we will be reaching out to districts as we move forward to the next phase.

MCOPA re: Face Coverings Order: Message sent to MA chiefs of police on 11/13. No exceptions for not masking at construction sites and details. Chief Farnsworth checked in with departments and almost everyone has policies about needing to wear a mask. If you are having issues call your chief, and if you still have issues, send it to the inter-agency staff and Chief Farnsworth will follow-up.

MAHB updated [cease and desist template](#).

Questions from emails:

Q: Is additional guidance forthcoming on the holiday season? For example, are pictures with Santa allowed?

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH WEBINAR 11/17/2020



A: Yes, developing information. For the interim, standards being used for Thanksgiving could also apply to other holidays. Also received questions about light displays.

Q: If a restaurant has not paid the fine for COVID-19 violations, can the LBOH hold up their food permit for 2021 and their liquor license for 2021?

A: This question is about violating Governor's orders or nuisance violation, speak to municipal attorney before making any decisions, but in general [Ch.40 Sec.57](#) does permit local licenses and permits to not be renewed or issued if there are outstanding municipal charges. In order for this law to be effective, city or town must have adopted it as a bylaw or an ordinance. Check with city or town clerk to see if they've adopted Ch.40 Sec.57. If you have a local regulation relative to a local food code or service permit regulation, it might be included. This is virtually included in all tobacco violations, and also check the permit itself to see what the permit says. Other avenue could be to go to ABCC for additional assistance.

Q: What is the status regarding the Travel Order for someone who recently recovered from COVID-19? They are not recommended for re-testing for 90 days, must they quarantine upon returning to the state?

A: For people who have recently recovered from COVID-19, they do not need to retest as part of this, but if they are asked for information about being re-tested, they would need to provide information about them having a positive test recently (and their contagious period having passed). They still need to fill out the form. There is no specific language about this in the travel order, we recommend the person carries and produces information about their recent infection in the last 90 days, but would not recommend quarantining.

Q: We are getting inquiries from organizations that sponsor winter vacation camps that care for children during winter/spring school vacations. Will there be guidance for those programs?

A: [Safety standards](#) for [recreational camps and also programs](#) that are similar to camps, since these camps fall outside of the EEC remote learning or other oversight criteria, then those standards are the ones that apply. No overnights, follow COVID-19 standards for very similar programs that would have been operating in the summer.

Q: The office standards have not been updated since July. Are there plans to revise those standards?

A: Not that we're aware of right now.

Q: Is there guidance or plans available for running an emergency shelter under the COVID pandemic? Do you know if shelters are exempt from indoor gathering guidance?

A: There is information on homeless shelters, and warming centers, but we are checking in on this. MEMA is the agency that develops safety standards. We recognize this is of general

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH WEBINAR 11/17/2020



interest, but we are still tracking down this information if there are specific standards or general information. I suspect indoor gathering numbers do not apply.

Q: Any word on coatrooms in salons and shops? The standards still don't allow for them?

A: This restriction is now only in close contact/personal services salons and barbershops standards. Need to be removed, but these will be edited/deleted as they have been from other standards.

Q: We see a lot of very late or outright missing positive lab reports. I am seeing up to a 4 day lag in reporting, also issue about missing labs can you respond?

A: Average turnaround time (specimen collection date to arrival in MAVEN date) around 2 days. Have seen recent increase of the proportion of testing being done by large commercial laboratories, such as Quest, and since the entire country is in surge right now, their ability for quick turnarounds has been impacted. In terms of missing labs, difficult to comment on this. What's more helpful if you can provide specific examples about someone getting testing and no result 7 days later, and where the testing was done, and what facility, and the lab that took the test. Unless we can gather specific information, not much more I can say about that. With the huge volume happening throughout MA, I would be surprised if there was never a missing lab, but if you are seeing things consistently, definitely let us know about this.

Q: Do children aged 11-18 years have to be tested before returning to MA from a high-risk state if their traveling adult tests negative?

A: 11-18 are required to be tested and quarantine independent of the adults, captured in the [Travel Order](#).

Q: Do classrooms have to close for 12 hours after being cleaned when a positive case has been identified there? The most recent protocols still have that language from 9/14 but other sector standards have removed extended closures.

A: [Facilities guidance](#) has cleaning and disinfecting information in it, but in our [protocols document](#) that was updated on 9/14 does state that any area of the school where a COVID-19 positive individual spent time in must be closed off 12 hours after cleaning and disinfecting. We are going to confer with our office and medical advisory team to get the most updated and accurate information to make sure we are providing you with the best information. Hopefully to be done by Friday.

Questions from attendees in Q&A box:

Q: Funding and demands of second surge: do we know if CARES Act funding will be extended beyond December 31st, and are there any discussions about "dialing back" given the surge?

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH WEBINAR 11/17/2020



A: Have not heard about any extension about the CARES Act money. Can't say for sure about dialing back, but Governor has said in a recent press conference that he has no plans to make different adjustments.

Q: Having trouble with the local post office in Charlton in regards to employees not wearing masks. Can we enforce the mask order at the local post office?

A: Postal employees, considered as federal employees, are not required to follow the face covering order.

Q: False positives/false negative rate of mouth swab being used at Walgreens?

A: I cannot speak to this, but am happy to investigate and look it up and provide an answer on Friday.

Q: Does the BinaxNOW antigen test need to be followed up with PCR?

A: Testing guidance in MA still recommends that all antigen tests be followed by a PCR. With BinaxNOW and schools, there might be different recommendations in this context. I anticipate as things continue to change, the testing guidance about the PCR will evolve, but at this point this is the current testing guidance.

Q: Any support while communities go through different colors?

A: A lot of resources already available to communities regardless of the color rating on the map. When the [COVID-19 Enforcement and Intervention Team](#) was created, they were tasked to spend time and resources to communities in red. Some communities persistently struggling and still struggling with high rates. The types of resources available to those communities are available to other communities. The public health piece—testing around for clusters in particular, no current plans to expand Stop the Spread sites, but there is a time limited testing through schools and other types of circumstances for clusters. Also available for other communities who might have a cluster from a large party for example. One of the resources is accessing community supports through the CTC. Similarly, the type of work DLS has done in terms of enforcement questions, and dealing with recalcitrant businesses like Home Depot and Cumby's, ABCC can also support if businesses with liquor licenses are violating restrictions and are operating a bar or are not closing or not following gathering orders. Risk communication templates also available. Communities who turn red, CEIT will send an email on how to access the resources we just discussed. Monday morning webinars help towns talk through how to use these resources to control the spread.

Q: Green and gray, are they both good? What are the implications for being in green or gray?

A: If you read the definitions that apply to each of the colors, you will see that gray is the lowest level of activity, green is next, and so forth. If you are in either green or gray, then this a pretty

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH WEBINAR 11/17/2020



good sign, especially right now when we are seeing cases increase. Want to flag to everyone that none of us can be complacent, we are seeing cases increase, maybe your community is looking good this week, but nearby communities not looking as good, and as we know community spread can easily come back to your community. The color scale is designed to help you develop different interventions as your risk escalates to help slow the transmission.

Q: Gatherings at a private residence, residents want to have an outdoor and indoor party simultaneously, what are the limits for the combined indoor/outdoor party?

A: DLS doesn't have enforcement jurisdiction over private residences, but we are familiar with all the standards. In a restaurant or other setting, they are not allowed to split an event ([indoor/outdoor](#)) because there are no ways to police this and there will be mixing.

Q: There was a conference call with ABCC and several health departments that mentioned the tent standards have been moved back to require 50% airflow, are we going back to this?

A: I don't know the context of how this comment was made, I (Michael Flanagan) was not on the call, but I can talk to the tent in general—restaurants are allowed to have indoor dining still in both step 1 and step 2, so communities dropping the tent size from 50% or 100% is not relevant, but there are important restrictions about fire safety and how these tents are being heated. Reach out to your local Fire Chief to make sure it's safe. Also, requirements about indoor and outdoor performances at restaurants, if an outdoor performance is being held in a step 1 community (only outdoor performances are allowed in step 1) ABCC would be correct that it needs to 50% but I cannot confirm what was said on the call.

Q: [Gyms](#)—do people exercising at the gym need to wear masks when they're 14 ft apart, or if they're wearing masks, can you be closer than 14 ft apart?

A: Rules around mask wearing has not changed. If you are 14 ft or more apart, you can remove your mask. If you are closer than 14 ft, you are not allowed to remove your mask.

Q: Which schools districts were selected for Phase 1 of the BinexNOW program, where can people find this?

A: This information has not been posted on DESE's website yet, hopefully by Friday we will have an update.

Q: Can you discuss 6 ft spacing in a school setting vs 3 ft given Governor's new recommendations?

A: Not familiar about the Governor's new recommendations, but 3ft-6ft has been part of the DESE's guidance since we sent out guidance, but this is a local decision about what distancing should be used.

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH WEBINAR 11/17/2020



Q: Contact tracing in classrooms, if students are more than 6ft apart with masks on and the class is a 90 min block, will the individuals around them still be close contacts?

A: DESE and DPH guidance are aligned on this, and the recommendations is that individuals that are closer than 6 ft for more than 15 min regardless of wearing masks or not are considered close contacts. At this point based on info we have, people who are more than 6 ft away, regardless of the length of time, at this point are not close contacts. We have heard that some LBOH and schools have chosen to make more conservative decisions, but DESE/DPH guidance says above.

Q: Guidance regarding recommended cardiac clearance for athletes returning to play after COVID-19, what is required from an ECHO?

A: No one can answer this.

Q: Lots of travel going to happen because of Thanksgiving, how is the Travel Order going to be adhered to?

A: The Travel Order still applies to people, residents included, coming into MA from a higher risk state.

Q: Webinar on the Friday after Thanksgiving?

A: Open to doing whatever people want to do.

Q: If a store in the mall is closed but an employee is in the store, are they required to wear a mask?

A: Is the employee alone in the store? If they were the only person in the store, and the doors are locked, then this would be acceptable to remove their masks.

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