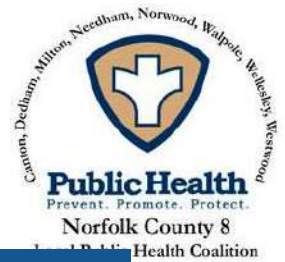


Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH WEBINAR 12/8/2020



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
- Mary Dozois and Adam Kinney, Department of Labor Standards
- Cheryl Sbarra, Massachusetts Association of Health Boards
- Chief Jeff Farnsworth, Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association

Announcements:

Rolling-back update: Statewide rollback to Phase 3, Step 1. Goes into effect 12:01 am on Sunday, the 13th. Sector-specific standards are going to be significantly altered, stay tuned as we update them. Updates to capacity limits will go into effect: Outdoor gatherings at event venues and public spaces limited to 50 people. Outdoor theatre and performance venues to 25% and no more than 50 people. Close indoor theatres and performance venues and a few smaller indoor recreation businesses like roller rinks and trampoline parks. Reduce capacity from 50% to 40% for several industry sectors noted below: Arcades/Indoor and Outdoor Recreational Businesses; Driving and Flight Schools; Gyms/Health Clubs; Libraries; Museums; Retail; Offices; Places of Worship; Lodging (common areas); Golf; Movie theatres (no more than 50 people per theatre).

Restaurant and event venues protocols updates: The following updates will be made to restaurant and event venue protocols with regard to face coverings, seating, and performances. Wear masks at all times except when eating and drinking; seat no more than 6 per table (used to be 10) and encourage customers to only dine with same household; put a 90 min time limit on tables; prohibit all musical performances at restaurants; close food court seating. Ideally this is just for a pause while numbers come back down.

Workplaces and fitness center protocols updates: Require mask wearing in offices when not in your own workspace and alone; require mask wearing at all times in gyms; encourage teleworking. This is no longer if "office spaces are available to the public" but also along with your co-workers. Gyms: wear masks at all time.

Quarantine Update: Isolation requirements have not changed and the incubation period remains to be 14 days, but it is unlikely for it to take this long.

Release on Day 8 if—A test (either PCR or antigen) taken on Day 5 (NO EARLIER) or later is negative AND the individual has not experienced any symptoms up to that point AND the individual conducts active monitoring through Day 14.

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Release on Day 11 if—The individual has not experienced any symptoms up to that point AND the individual conducts active monitoring through day 14. No test is necessary under this option.

Release on Day 15 if—the individual has experienced ANY symptoms during the quarantine period EVEN if they have a negative COVID-19 test OR the individual indicates they are unwilling or unable to conduct active monitoring.

Critical Infrastructure: Clarifies that certain sectors may continue to work during their quarantine period to preserve critical societal functions. Only allowed if the worker remains asymptomatic. Sectors include healthcare workers, first responders, and critical infrastructure workers, as defined by the CDC. The list DPH is using is the list as defined by CDC. Guidance sent yesterday and also at www.mass.gov/quarantine. Some quick examples: Utility workers needed to support power, veterinarian surgical units, DPW workers snow plowing.

Questions from emails:

Q: Can a LBOH stick with a 14 day quarantine order without allowing for a testing out option? Can they be stricter than what the department is recommending?

A: From a legal standpoint, the answer is yes. This is a local authority issue, but what Dr. Brown would say is there are a lot of good reasons to utilize the shorter strict quarantine periods and would encourage the use of those to the extent possible.

Q: If somebody tests positive and is asymptomatic and then later develops symptoms, do they need to start their isolation when the symptoms start or when they tested positive?

A: What we know from the data are that people are only capable for transmitting for a short period of time from the time they are detectable. From a public health standpoint, it would make the most sense to still utilize that positive test. At this point start the isolation period.

Q: If a student commutes regularly to an out of state “ski school” are they exempted from the travel order requirements?

A: Ski school isn’t school, it’s sports, and they are not exempted from the travel order requirements.

Q: Can we get updated data and information on where transmission is emanating from?

A: Dr. Brown will do a quick cluster update on Friday or next week. Our data is showing the same thing we have seen before, transmission is happening in a lot of different settings, correctional facilities, hospitals, anywhere people are getting together.

Q: If a person in quarantine is a close contact and exhibit symptoms but is not tested should they be isolated?

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A: If they have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, because they are close contacts, they should be considered a case of COVID-19 because they become a probable case. They should definitely get tested, but if not, they shift from quarantine period to isolation period which would be 10 days from onset of symptoms.

Q: Why do people have to wait until day 8 if they tested negative on day 5?

A: Modeling done by CDC, suggested that the combination of the testing no earlier than day 5 and waiting till day 7 to make sure there were no development of symptoms gave 95% confidence that they would not go on to develop COVID-19.

Q: Is there any indication that a saliva PCR test is any less reliable than a nasal swab PCR test?

A: Slightly less reliable, but ONLY slightly. Saliva PCR data is pretty good.

Q: Any rationale provided for why we would be accepting antigen testing for those with a known exposure but are asymptomatic but this doesn't apply for travel or schools?

A: Thinking about the travel order and if antigen testing should be included there. Personal opinion is we don't want people to be traveling right now, but this is one reason to stick with a PCR but discussions are happening. Antigen testing with BinaxNOW from other parts of the country say its most reliable than other antigen tests. Antigen testing in general is more useful at a time when we have high transmission rates.

Q: Any news on coat rooms in the close contact guidance?

A: Can be opened now in hair salons and close contact personal services. Updated on 11/6.

Q: Are bulk bins in grocery stores still prohibited? Can I go to Whole Foods and get lentils and put them in my own bag, but no salad bar?

A: Original retail standard in May said no to bulk bins, open food bins, and self-serve salad bars. And the language hasn't changed since May as of the most recent review on 11/6. Open food stations phrase gives some flexibility to food co-ops where they have dispensers for that type of retail, but no flexibility for salad bars. Yes you can get your lentils.

Q: Will DESE adopt the new quarantine guidance issued by DPH?

A: Yes, in the process of updating this, hopefully in the next day or two.

Q: Town elections coming up soon, a way for candidates to gather signatures electronically?

A: Not a DPH question. Will send this to someone associated with election protocols.

Q: Does DPH or DESE have any data on the coverage of school aged children and the mandatory flu shot? Is there a dashboard by county or town?

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A: [Mass.gov/info-details/school-immunizations](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/school-immunizations). School nurses send the vaccination information to DPH/DESE in January.

Q: Is there a way to provide testing in homes to homebound elders and people with disabilities?

A: There is information distributed by us to set up a [testing program in municipalities](#), refer to this testing page, its extensive, lots of information about what it takes, tests that are available, what you need to do to coordinate with a provider, all of this is on the same testing support page.

Q: Could you give us an update on PrepMod?

A: Not right now, hopefully on Friday.

Questions from Q&A chat box answered aloud:

Q: Many employers still do not understand the written guidance on identifying a close contact. Any dropdown or flow charts to pass out to employers, like a decision tree, so they don't need to keep calling LBOH?

A: Providing a one-stop shop around isolation and quarantine. Part of the challenge of talking to these individuals is jargon, point them to [definitions of close contacts written](#) (check pg 2).

Q: Does alone mean no one else in a big open area in a set of cubicles?

A: It doesn't really mean "by yourself" this needs to be elaborated on with updated sector standards.

Q: Rolling back—can movie theatres still have concession stands?

A: No answer right now.

Q: Does the shutdown of performance standard include practices or rehearsals?

A: No answer right now.

Q: Science behind the 90 min limit at restaurants?

A: It has to do with behavior at social clubs for example. Need to avoid having people hanging around and becoming too comfortable that eventually they take their masks off entirely.

Q: Do gas stations need to go back to serving coffee to customers?

A: Unsure.

Q: Who will enforce mask wearing at tables at restaurants?

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A: Manager of the restaurant, not the waitstaff. If it is a chronic problem in a restaurant where they receive complaints, the health department will be involved as well.

Q: Bowling alleys close?

A: List of impacted businesses is on the website. (Check email from Ron O'Connor on 12/8)

Q: Can a musician play outside?

A: Waiting to see what the sector standards are.

Q: DESE—can an individual private school choose to only keep one option for the quarantine?

A: Private schools are not held to same requirements as public schools, but we highly encourage private schools to follow our guidance and highly recommend that they communicate with LBOH.

Q: Addresses for first responders each day for EMS. Probable cases are not on the list, but based on the information they are now cases and not probable. How do we go about this?

A: Unsure how extensively this webinar reaches first responders, whoever going to anyone's home needs to assume that those in the home have COVID-19. Having the address provided to you isn't necessarily going to mean you are safe in other circumstances.

Questions from Q&A chat box not answered aloud:

Trey Cassidy - 2:58 PM

Q: I hope we will hear more about the expectations about indoor sports arenas for teams, including hockey rinks, indoor turf field facilities, etc. Thanks-

-Mike Coughlin - 3:02 PM

A: EEA, the agency that sets sports standards, are not with us today so we may not be able to discuss those issues or take those questions.

Cheryl Messer-Lusty - 3:20 PM

Q: Does the state going to step 1 of phase three, mean that towns that have been in the red for 3 weeks go back further...into phase 2?-

-Mike Coughlin - 3:20 PM

A: no, it doesn't.

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Heather Gallant - 3:21 PM

Q: Roller rinks are mentioned - what about Ice Rinks? Thank you. -

-Mike Coughlin - 3:21 PM

A: Ice rinks fall under youth and adult sports. No changes on that sector were announced today.

Dan Markman - 3:22 PM

Q: Does the new retail limit of 40% apply to grocery stores as well?-

-Mike Coughlin - 3:23 PM

A: yes.

David Deminico - 3:25 PM

Q: Is the time to close still at 930 or what it was in stage 3.1-

-Mike Coughlin - 3:26 PM

A: the early closing order is still in effect, it is not impacted by today's changes.

Sharon Cameron - 3:30 PM

Q: Does sports guidance also rollback to Phase 3 Step 1?-

-Mike Coughlin - 3:30 PM

A: Yes, the whole state is in Phase III Step 1

Kristin Kennedy - 3:31 PM

Q: Indoor dining, no entertainment meaning no trivia nights, etc, correct? What about outdoor dining? Tent with two sides up, entertainment options?-

-Mike Coughlin - 3:32 PM

A: Those amenities are not allowed in the same space as regular dining, indoors or out.

Jessica Cliff - 3:12 PM

Q: If doing the release on day 8, does the antigen still need to be confirmed with a PCR? -

-Jana Ferguson - 3:34 PM

A: The guidance does not require a confirmation PCR test.

susan mosler - 3:33 PM

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Q: movie theatre concession remains open?-

-Mike Coughlin - 3:35 PM

A: yes

Jennifer Sullivan - 3:44 PM

Q: Does a Santa brunch following guidelines qualify as an event or entertainment? Would that be allowed?-

-Mike Coughlin - 3:36 PM

A: That would be an event and be limited to 25 participants indoors

paloma Hobart - 3:28 PM

Q: where can i find that chart that you are talking about?-

-Jana Ferguson - 3:37 PM

A: We will send out a link later

Kelli Calo - 3:32 PM

Q: Can you talk about when a school should go full remote? We, at the LBOH, feel that the schools should go full-remote for about a month because we are overwhelmed and unable to keep up with the cases. However, the Superintendent is pushing back. -

-Cheryl Sbarra - 3:43 PM

A: I cannot unmute myself.

Linda Brown - 3:42 PM

Q: What about the self-service soda at gas stations...-

-Mike Coughlin - 3:43 PM

A: retail stores are still able to offer self serve beverage stations, with restrictions stated in the standards.-

Barry Lewis - 3:32 PM

Q: in an office space two desk face each other and plexi glass is up. those employees are still required to wear masks correct?-

-Mary Dozois - 3:43 PM

A: Yes, facemask even if plexiglass separates office workers

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Richard Reuss - 3:44 PM

Q: do bowling alleys need to close?-

-Mike Coughlin - 3:45 PM

A: no

Deirdre Arvidson - 3:45 PM

Q: There are EMS companies that are doing home visits-

-Cheryl Sbarra - 3:46 PM

A: Yes, I believe that electronic signatures are acceptable now. There was a decision in August by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court that held that requiring "wet" signatures was unreasonable during a COVID-19 pandemic.

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