

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH Webinar 2/5/2021



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
- Donna Quinn and Mary Clark, Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management, DPH
- Michael Flanagan and Adam Kinney, Department of Labor Standards
- Helene Bettencourt and Anne Gilligan, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Cheryl Sbarra, Massachusetts Association of Health Boards
- Chief Edward Dunne, Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association
- Jeff Farnsworth, Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

Announcements:

Extension of capacity limits, Order #62: Expiring Monday, February 8th at 5:00 am. The following are returning to 40% capacity: Arcades and recreational businesses; driving and flight schools; gyms/health clubs; libraries; museums; retail; offices; places of worship; lodging (common areas); golf (indoor areas); movie theatres (no more than 50 people per theatre). There continues to be no capacity limits on manufacturing, construction, and laboratories—these have never had capacity limits.

Businesses *not* going back to exactly how things were before the extension of capacity limits:

-Restaurants will not be limited to 40% of their seated capacity and, as under the 25% capacity rule, employees will not count toward the limit. 90 minute per seating rule does not change.

-Close contact personal services will now be limited to 40% capacity and employees will not count toward the limit. A limit of 5 people per 1,000 sq ft applies for small businesses without an available fire occupancy capacity.

-Gatherings order limit will stay at 10 indoors, 25 outdoors.

The Commonwealth remains in Phase 3, Step 1 of reopening (Order No. 58). Indoor performance venues and indoor recreation businesses like roller rinks and trampoline parks remain closed.

Q: Food courts reopen?

A: Food court seating needs to be closed, but restaurants can still sell takeaway food.

Q: Adult day care capacity? Is there a limit?

A: Adult day care might be handled under different standards.

Q: What is the status of drive-in movie theatres, especially pop-ups.

A: Nothing has changed in these orders. They can be allowed, as long as they are following all local permitting and the rules as required. The biggest problems we've had with

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drive-ins is that people drive in and step out of their vehicles and tailgate. They must remain in their vehicle.

Q: High school games and spectators?

A: The EEA guidance for youth and adult sports allows for 50 spectators at outdoor games.

Q: Social clubs?

A: Not treated any differently than any restaurant or bar setting. If you are having issues with social clubs let Michael Flanagan (michael.flanagan@mass.gov) know, or ABCC.

Q: Is there still a 6 person limit at a table in a restaurant?

A: Yes.

Q: Can large venues have more than one event going at the same time if they are in completely different areas, such as downstairs and upstairs, these are inside.

A: No, they are required to limit to one event in a venue space indoors.

Q: Workplace trainings considered events?

A: Need more information from the person who asked.

Q: Do the new variants influence business decisions?

A: There is current surveillance about the new variants, 7 instances of B.1.1.7 (UK) variant. 3 of those cases were travel, the other 4 not linked to travel. While there is evidence of limited presence of this variant in MA, safe to say transmission is not widespread at the moment. All COVID-19 is bad, and we are trying to reduce transmission of all COVID variants. Numbers are coming down overall, but we will probably treat the variant as any other COVID.

Councils on Aging Clinic Appointment Support: Can Council on Aging fill out vaccine registration forms on behalf of senior citizens? Three issues: person signing the form is stating the following 1) the information is correct; 2) I have legal authority to give consent for the person registered to be vaccinated; and 3) my relationship to the patient is: (need to fill this out)

Liability protection in the [PREP Act](#)—federal law, clearing indicates that it covers distributing and administering vaccines and covers program planners—include state or local governments and persons employed by state or local governments or any other person who serves a program. This is MAHB's opinion, we cannot give legal advice to cities and towns, but it appears that this liability protection would extend to COA staff. Also, relationship to patient is "providing assistance and registering as an employee-volunteer." Make clear the relationship you are assisting them. The most important thing is the person who signs up a senior citizen follows steps 1-3.

Q: The senior's consent is required at vaccination, and this is different for registration and administering vaccine. Is this sufficient?

A: Steps 1-3 are about filling out the registration form, but both are probably covered by the PREP Act. Reach out to local counsel for confirmation.

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Q: Are COAs covered under MGL for a HIPAA exception?

A: Need to double check.

COVID-19 vaccine updates: Resource line being activated today, starting at 11:30 am today (2/5). Can be reached by calling 211. Resources available in English and Spanish, and translators can support in approximately 100 additional languages. Only for individuals 75 and older. Will be able to speak to a representative on the phone to assist them with an appointment through the state's public website, it will not give individuals access to additional appointments. If no appointments are available, callers will be placed on a call back list for mass vaccination sites and they will be called on a first-come, first-serve basis. The resource line is not to answer general questions about COVID-19 or provide individual health care advice. The quickest and easiest way to schedule a vaccine appointment or check availability is to use the online system at mass.gov/covidvaccine

Q: If seniors call 211 to schedule, and someone can find an appointment for them sooner, should they cancel their appointment?

A: Don't know the answer to this right now.

Q: Will this be available to others?

A: Unsure right now. We will see how this goes.

Q: Whether or not 211 will help 75 year old sign up for private clinics located on town website?

A: No, only for state website. If your clinic is not on there, we cannot access your clinic.

Q: Do people need an email address? If they have one, can it be used many times?

A: Unsure.

Eligibility for unpaid essential caregivers to receive vaccine: Unpaid essential caregivers of participating in the 8 programs listed below are eligible to be vaccinated (not clients) and are considered "home-based health care workers" for the purposes of COVID-19 prioritization. The eligible programs that service some of the Commonwealth's most medically complex individuals are:

- 1) Community Case Management (CCM) managed by MassHealth
- 2) Medical Review Team (MRT) managed by DPH
- 3) Care Coordination Program Level 3 managed by DPH
- 4) Pediatric Palliative Care Network managed by DPH
- 5) Medically Complex Programs managed by DDS
- 6) Intensive Family Support managed by DDS
- 7) DESE Program managed by DDS
- 8) Autism Waiver Program managed by DDS

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Steps for unpaid essential caregivers to receive vaccine:

Step 1: Look for vaccine locations and [search for available appointments](#)

Step 2: After a site is picked, visit the vaccine locations' website

Step 3: Fill out a [self-attestation form](#) and be ready to present it at the appointment. It can be filled out online or printed as a PDF.

Step 4: On the day of your appointment, vaccination sites will likely ask for confirmation email or printed PDF self-attestation form, an insurance card, and identification upon arrival.

Attestation now at beginning of PrepMod: To get vaccinated in Phase 1 or 2, people need to confirm ("attestation") that they are part of the currently eligible group within those phases. Depending on where they book the appointment, they may attest differently:

- Online or over the phone when booking

- If not asked when booking, will be asked to attest when they arrive at the appointment.

- Vaccination locations will likely have an attestation form available; however, people can fill out the COVID-19 Massachusetts Vaccination Attestation Form and bring it with them to their appointment to be prepared.

Vaccine inventory and administration: On Friday, 2/5, providers will not receive new vaccine allocations if they have not administered 85% of their cumulative doses shipped. CHC's need to meet a 65% threshold. Providers who do not meet the threshold will not be eligible to receive new vaccine until their supply has been administered and/or have had their vaccine redistributed to other providers.

Provider sites must report vaccine administration data to MIIS within 24 hours and need to make every effort to comply with the reporting requirements including demographic information, race, and ethnicity data. This is super important because these reports are sent to federal government and the government determines the allotments to MA. Failure to report data into MIIS within 24 hours may result in suspension of further allocation.

As a reminder, 2nd dose orders are prioritized above any other. Providers should never have 2nd doses sitting in inventory for appointments that are booked over 10 days out. DPH is committed to ensuring providers have timely access to vaccine to support administering the 2nd dose shots. If an error occurs and a provider has an insufficient supply of doses on hand to support 2nd dose appointments that are due, please email DPH-vaccine-management@massmail.state.ma.us and the DPH vaccine unit will reach out to you. In such an instance, providers will be expected to cancel first dose appointments to satisfy 2nd dose needs prior to requesting an allocation from the DPH. The 65% threshold for CHCs and the 85% threshold for all other healthcare providers will continue to be used on an ongoing basis.

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Calculations will be made on Tuesdays. Additional inventory management guidance will be forthcoming and be posted online.

Q: Is it 85% for LHDs?

A: Yes.

Q: Is the inventory correct on MIIS?

A: They are trying to see whether or not that reported information is not correct, or if something else is happening. There are staff who are calling everyone this week.

Q: When you submit clinic data does it sent to MIIS?

A: Yes.

Additional comments: [Toolkit for communication](#) for the public sent out last night. For vaccination groups, the state is currently in priority group 1 of Phase 2 and local providers should be doing the same. Drop-in hours for PrepMod and trainings for PrepMod still happening. Please use those drop-in hours. PrepMod sending links out to site administrators. Pause on updating priority groups for the moment.

Additional questions:

Q: Restaurant clusters? And how are people looking at restaurant clusters?

A: Yes, still having them. The data show that order #62 did reduce restaurant clusters, but it didn't make them go away entirely. And now that cases are going down, anticipating that there are fewer clusters in general, including in restaurants. But, restaurants are still a higher risk setting. Not anticipating for restaurant clusters to go away anytime soon.

Q: If someone tests positive for one of the variants, are you reaching out directly to LBOHs? Are you telling people that they have the new variant?

A: Yes on LBOH. We are telling people when we call them, because we need to do investigative work.

Questions from Q&A not answered out loud:

Heather Gallant - 9:11 AM

Q: What about someone renting space in a banquet hall to be used for a training? If the capacity is posted.-

-Michael Flanagan - 9:13 AM

A: It would still be limited to 10 people indoors.

Libby Levison - 9:13 AM

Q: I am being asked by State Senator for messaging about vaccine rollout, equity, and targeting hot spots. I'd feel more comfortable sharing DPH outreach on this topic. Does DPH have something? Thanks in advance-

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-Jana Ferguson - 9:14 AM

A: Libby, please go ahead and refer the State Senator to our legislative team.

Jeanne Galloway - 9:14 AM

Q: social media reports the b117 variant is transmissible within seconds of contact with a carrier. what can you say about this?-

-Catherine Brown - 9:17 AM

A: Hi Jeanne - the B1.1.7 variant is more transmissible. Anyone with COVID that has a high level of virus can spread to others in a short period of time.

Cathryn Hampson - 9:11 AM

Q: A custody arrangement w/one parent in MA and one in NH...the NH parent travels with the student, stays overnight at hotel, does this situation still fall under the custody exemption to the travel order or does this student now test on return to MA? -

-Jana Ferguson - 9:16 AM

A: Custody arrangements are exempt and there are no specific limitations around hotel stays.

Ivan Colon - 9:17 AM

Q: Indoor events in restaurants would still fall under the indoor event guidelines for occupancy level correct? -

-Mike Coughlin - 9:19 AM

A: That is correct.

Linda Arruda - 9:15 AM

Q: Do individuals who have tested with the variant, are they informed?-

-Catherine Brown - 9:19 AM

A: Linda - at the moment they are being re-interviewed to determine travel history so yes they are informed (to explain why they are being called again). The public health recommendations are still the same

Linda Arruda - 9:20 AM

Q: Thank you for answering this, would the local board of health also be informed of which individual has tested positive for the variant?-

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-Catherine Brown - 9:20 AM

A: Yes, we have been notifying them

Ruth Mori - 9:22 AM

Q: Just a correction to where credit is due. That was Ruth Clay who provided the Attestation component and not Ruth Mori to Cheryl-

-Cheryl Sbarra - 9:25 AM

A: No, it was actually your email Ruth Mori! Ruth Clay offered to send me the online registration form! Thank you to both of you!-

doug Kress - 9:30 AM

Q: I am getting push back from SN about N95 masks are these required for school nurses in the waiting area or screening for students? It is my understanding a procedure mask and face shield is recommended due to shortage of N95. Is this documented anywhere? -

-Catherine Brown - 9:33 AM

A: Doug - N95s are recommended but procedure masks can be substituted when N95s are not available. Although it is important to be careful about supply, N95s are not currently in short supply for healthcare workers.

Ivan Colon - 9:15 AM

Q: Indoor events in restaurants would still fall under the indoor event guidelines for occupancy level correct? -

-Michael Flanagan - 9:35 AM

A: Yes, that is correct

Chris Webb - 9:30 AM

Q: Do AA meetings and recovery centers get the 40% occupancy allowance?-

-Michael Flanagan - 9:39 AM

A: They are required to follow the indoor event standard.

zackary seabury - 9:49 AM

Q: Can we receive a recording of this meeting? -

-Catherine Brown - 9:52 AM

A: These meetings are not recorded

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Libby Levison - 9:15 AM

Q: Thanks Jana, how do I reach your legislative team?-

-Jana Ferguson - 9:54 AM

A: Your state senator's office has that information.

Jennifer Murphy - 9:54 AM

Q: On Feb 8th restaurant capacity back to 40% and yet the state still has clusters? And we explain this how?-

-Catherine Brown - 9:56 AM

A: Jennifer - risk is not zero but as cases decrease overall, we would anticipate fewer clusters overall, including in restaurants

Ellen Lufkin - 9:53 AM

Q: But you have just said not time to do low income senior housing.....-

-Mike Coughlin - 9:56 AM

A: Program is explained here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-vaccinations-for-senior-housing-settings>

Dr. Marcia Herzberg - 9:54 AM

Q: We are seeing several grocery store cases is anyone else-

-Catherine Brown - 9:57 AM

A: Dr. Herzberg - definitely a setting where we have seen cases consistently