

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH Webinar 3/26/2021



Inter-agency Staff on the Webinar

- Jana Ferguson, Assistant Commissioner, DPH
- Ron O'Connor, Office of Local and Regional Health, DPH
- Dr. Catherine Brown, Glynnis LaRosa, Laurie A. Courtney, Adam Muir, Juliana Jacoboski, Patricia Kludt, and Esther Rei 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, Anne Gilligan, and Anne Marie Stronach, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Dr. John Welch, Community Tracing Collaborative
- Cheryl Sbarra, Massachusetts Association of Health Boards
- Chief Edward Dunne, Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association
- Jeff Farnsworth, Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
- Amanda Campen, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency Disaster Recovery Unit

Announcements:

CTC: Reduced staffing in March, but still have capacity to support LBOH. Not going to scale back anymore in the immediate future. Plans are being discussed to continue the CTC through the summer. Continue to reach out to Local Health Liaison if you have general questions or case-specific questions.

MassNotify (the official COVID-19 automated exposure notification system for MS): Not meant to replace existing contact tracing work or any other public health intervention, it just adds an extra layer. Powered by Exposure Notification (EN) technology developed by Apple and Google, Bluetooth based, not GPS. Big focus on privacy. Individuals have to opt-in to get or send exposure notifications and can opt-out at anytime. The system is anonymous, users won't know where or by whom they were exposed; no surveillance information is gathered. This helps to facilitate swift testing/self-quarantine of potential exposures.

How does it work? When two people using MassNotify on their smartphones are near each other, the phones exchange random codes using Bluetooth. Codes are completely anonymous, with no location tracking or exchange of identifying personal information. When someone tests positive, they will receive a text message from DPH with a verification link. The person who tests positive can choose to follow the link to anonymously share their positive test result with individuals the phone exchanged random keys with. Anyone who also has MassNotify and has been near the user who tested positive for a significant length of time in the last 14 days may receive an anonymous alert that they might have been exposed. Notifications have a link to information about what to do next to protect yourself and others. A phone number to CTC is

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provided if they need support to quarantine. They do not contain any information about who tested positive or where the exposure may have happened. A MassNotify Helpdesk email address will also be available for anyone with technical questions and issues.

Recent analysis: Released in early February from the NHS COVID-19 app in the UK, early evidence of the epidemiological impact of the UK's exposure notification technology in that setting.

- EN helped avert additional cases. Analysis suggests 200,000 to 900,000 COVID-19 cases were averted by using the app.

- identify additional contacts. The number of notifications per contact tracing event was 4.4. For comparison, the mean number of contacts traced per index case by the central manual tracing system in the same period was 1.8.

- EN contacts were as likely to become infected as manual contacts. The app-identified contacts were just as likely to become infected as contacts identified via manual tracing, indicating a similar level of accuracy.

- Improvements to app increased accuracy & efficacy.

What does this analysis mean for MA? MassNotify and the NHS app utilize the same Bluetooth exposure notification technology. The study of the NHS app demonstrates the potential positive epidemiological impact of MassNotify, and how lessons learned can help inform near real-time adjustments that may increase overall efficacy of MassNotify. An additional public health tool may also help with stopping the spread of potential new variants.

Current timeline (draft): Hoping to launch mid-April.

MassNotify Pilot Approach

DRAFT—Not for Distribution



Municipal partners' role during the pilot: Communicate to residents that MassNotify is available for use. The Commonwealth will provide materials and content. Provide feedback to the

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Commonwealth that will help inform a statewide launch decision. The municipality is asked to assigned a point of contact to share updates and anecdotal feedback from the community. Coordinate with the Commonwealth to answer questions from media or other municipalities.

Summary of COVID-19 sports clusters in MA: (data current as of 3/10/2021, represents about 60% of all cluster cases).

Recently in the news have been clusters in wrestling and cheerleading. Since January, we are seeing an uptick in the overall number of sports clusters, hockey is still seeing more activity than other sports. Seeing an uptick in college sports clusters, and notable upticks in baseball, football, soccer, and lacrosse. This is all expected with changing seasons. Most clusters are explained by exposures at games and practices, whereas social events do not appear to be a common exposure.

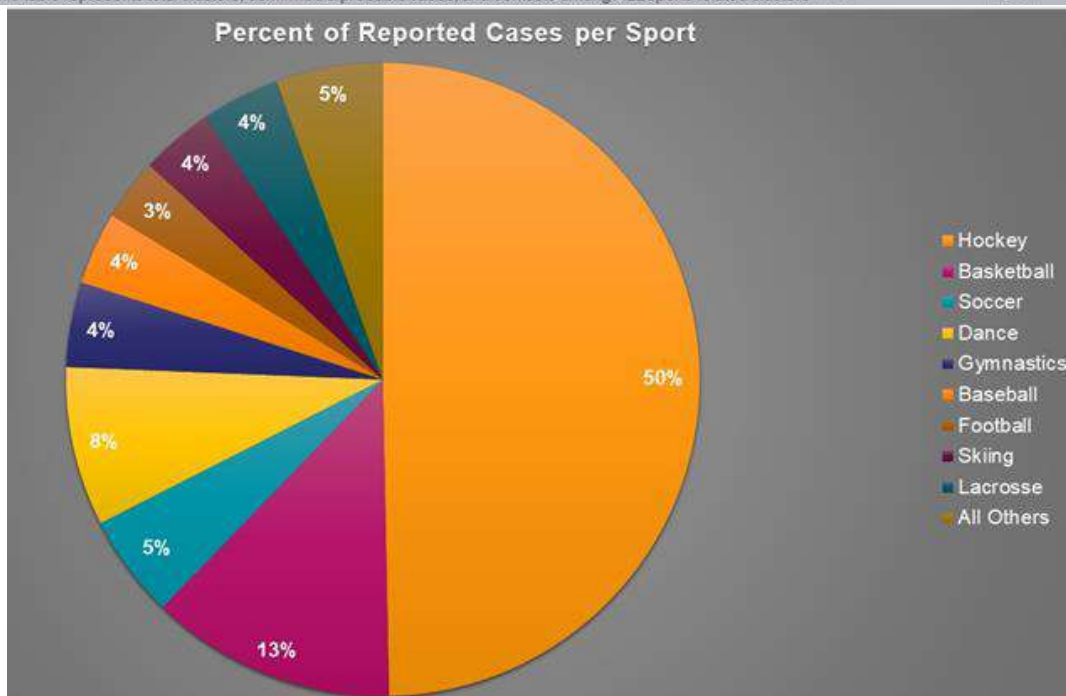
Sports Clusters Documented in MAVEN*

	N	Cases (Confirmed & Probable)	Contacts	Risk Level
Hockey	158	630	1,578	High
Basketball	50	159	261	High
Dance	17	103	139	Moderate
Soccer	17	67	104	Moderate
Gymnastics	11	55	90	Low
Baseball	9	47	112	Moderate
Football	9	40	57	High
Lacrosse	8	51	20	Moderate (F) or High (M)
Skiing	7	47	10	Low
All Others	20	69	99	Varies

*This table represents total clusters, confirmed & probable cases, and contacts among ALL sports related clusters document

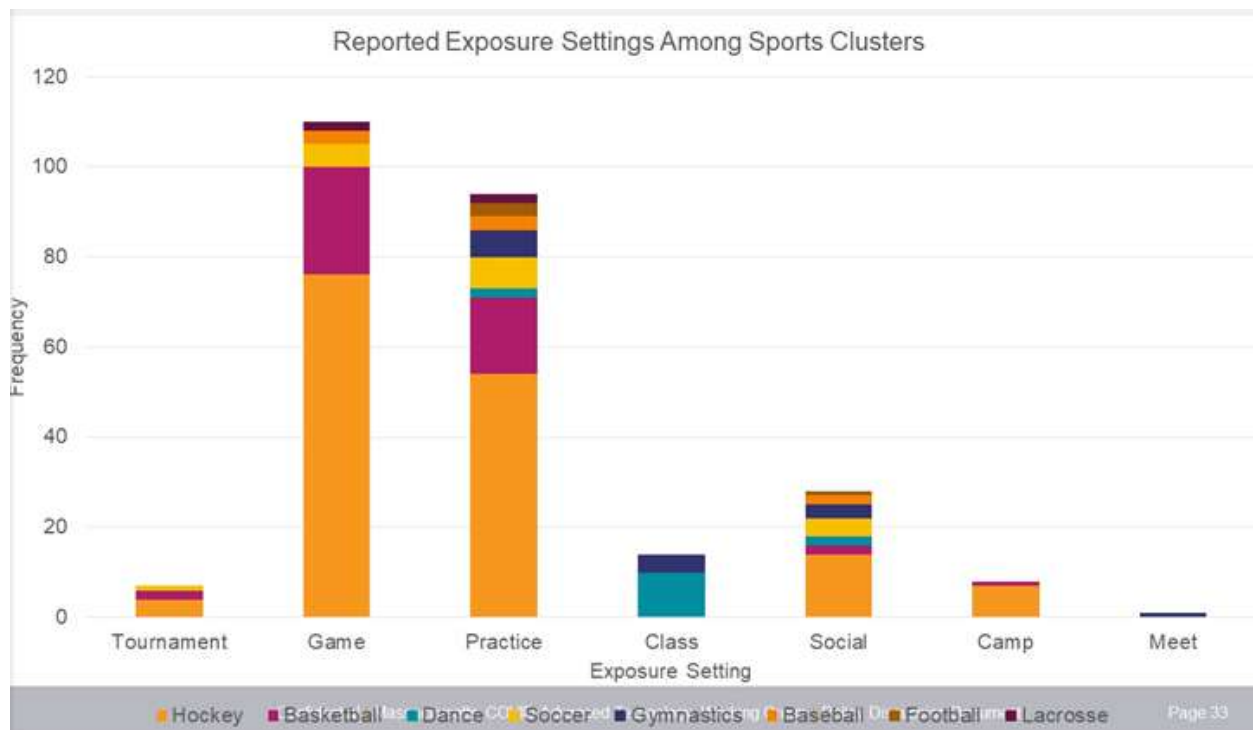
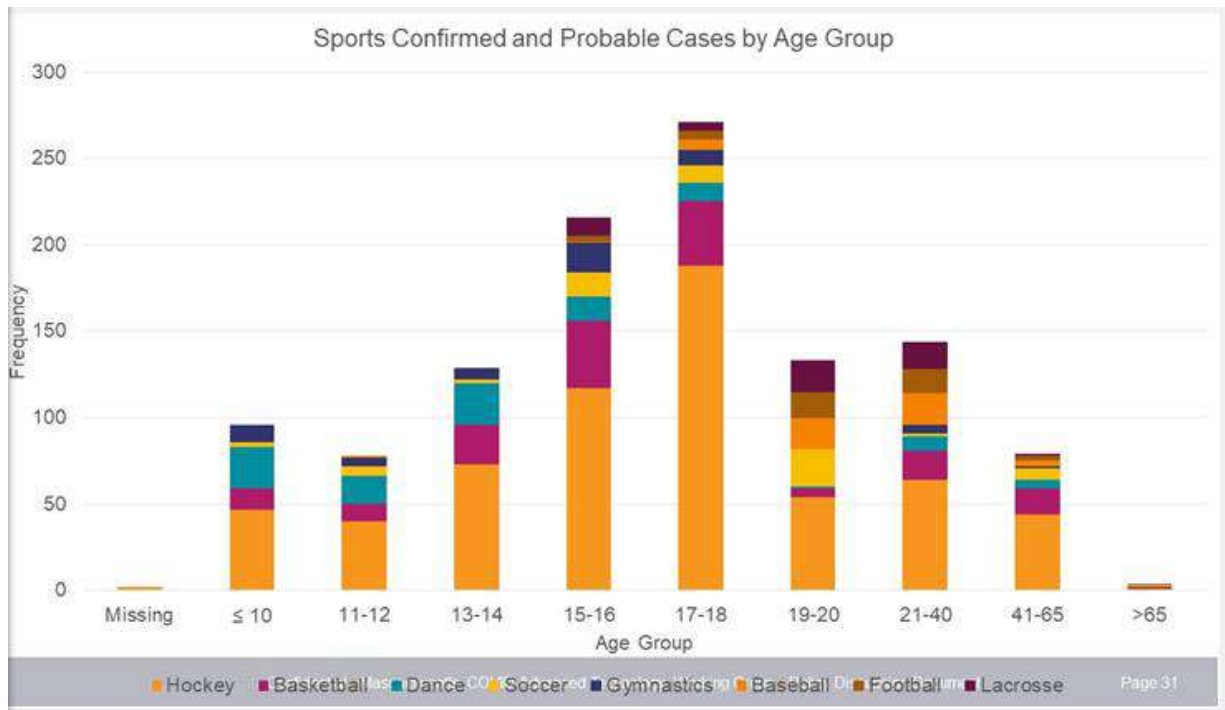
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Percent of Reported Cases per Sport



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Q: Hockey cases, do they include ice, deck, and field hockey?

A: When speaking about Hockey we reference ice hockey. Although field hockey has had clusters, they're in a different category. We have never heard of deck hockey.

Q: Is the data focusing on players or are you considering coaches and other staff?

A: Anybody who is within 6ft for 15 min is counted as part of the cluster.

Q: Are you also including other sports, such as table pool and tennis?

A: Yes, there have been tennis and cornhole clusters.

Q: Where do the sports clusters fall in relation to the specific clusters in families, correctional facilities, etc?

A: You can get a really good idea of the contribution that sports are making to clusters overall by reviewing the [Weekly Public Health Report](#).

Q: If a lacrosse player tests positive, does the whole team and opposing team have to quarantine like in hockey?

A: Contact tracing for all sports should be attempted first and foremost, hockey gets the special treatment because we have a lot of data to support team-to-team transmission.

Q: Standards for indoor yoga classes?

A: Link to [EEA guidance that specializes on fitness classes in gyms](#).

Other updates: In-home vaccination launch, website and phone line went live yesterday. We are also collecting information from the communities who have identified that they want to perform in-home vaccinations in their communities, information includes how many doses are needed. About 170 health departments chose to do option 1-choosing to do in-home vaccination in your community (~40% of MA population), and the remainder (181) chose option 2-enrolling in the state program (~60% of MA population).

Homebound vaccination—Moderna vaccine extremely constrained, if somebody asks for vaccines from your community it's to fulfill the second doses of another senior housing clinic.

Questions from Q&A answered out loud:

Q: Plexiglass separators at bar seating?

A: When parties are seated at the bar, there can be plexiglass separating the person from the bar, but the standards do not allow for plexiglass to separate patrons at the bar.

Q: Lost vaccine documentation card?

A: If a person has lost or misplaced their card, they can go to their healthcare provider and they can pull them up on MIIS. Or they can fill out a form through MIIS and get a new record card.

Questions from Q&A not answered out loud:

-Colleen McGrath - 8:53 AM

Q: Questions about "Arrival testing" for Overnight camps that was discussed/ published on Tuesday. It says all campers and staff must obtain a negative PCR within 72 hours of coming to

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camp (unless hx of positive w/in 90 days). Does that include vaccinated individuals? and, does everyone then need another PCR or Binax when they arrive ATcamp.-

-jenn robertson - 9:11 AM

A: Yes, at this time vaccinated individuals are included in testing protocols-

-Colleen McGrath - 9:13 AM

Q: Thank you- and a second test is required when arriving at camp?-

-jenn robertson - 9:15 AM

A: Yes, campers and staff must receive a test on arrival at camp.

-Susan Avallone - 9:10 AM

Q: Question regarding schools. If classrooms are 3 feet distance of students and exposure occurs are we looking at close contacts <6 feet or 3 feet? Heard one district state close exposure only if in cafeteria and masks are off and want to clarify.-

-Jana Ferguson - 9:17 AM

A: We still define a close contact as someone within 6 feet. -

-Misty Foss Trombly - 9:15 AM

Q: Will the notification say the date of potential exposures? -

-Jill Finnerty - 9:19 AM

A: Yes the tool provides an exposure date. It will give it a window of 24 hours from the precise time of exposure to preserve privacy.-

-peggy hart - 9:18 AM

Q: Will MA Notify interface with anything used in other states?-

-Jill Finnerty - 9:22 AM

A: Yes, MassNotify is compatible with all other Google/Apple exposure notification apps running in other states. -

-Thomas Carbone - 9:17 AM

Q: Does Mass Notify screen out people whose phones have been near each other for less than 15 minutes? Or is it anyone who has passed by you on the street?-

-Jill Finnerty - 9:24 AM

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A: MassNotify is configurable by DPH and there are "risk scores" that are assigned based on duration of time spent in proximity as well as infectiousness. The settings approximate the 6 feet, 15 minute guidelines - though Bluetooth technology is not able to be quite that precise.-

-Gayle Nutile-Pimm - 9:24 AM

Q: School question- will there be any additional guidance for proms? -

-Anne Gilligan - 9:27 AM

A: The prom guidance is in progress, schools were informed it will be available at the end of March.-

-Michael Flanagan - 9:28 AM

A: Barring any specific standards established by DESE, proms would be required to follow the Indoor and Outdoor Events Standard.

-Joanne Belanger - 9:16 AM

Q: once someone is positive and a notification goes out - does it only go to those who may have been in contact in the last 2 days or to everyone who has ever been in contact with the positive case?-

-Jill Finnerty - 9:28 AM

A: The notification is sent to phones deemed to have been exposed during the case's infectious period. That is configured in the app by DPH. The timing of the notification is dependent upon when the case enters the verification code in MassNotify.-

-Kathleen Peterson - 9:10 AM

Q: Most seniors do not have smart phone or email addresses-

-Jill Finnerty - 9:31 AM

A: Yes, this intervention is not one that will be uniformly adopted. We understand the equity issues with MassNotify (it requires a smartphone to participate). This is one crucial reason why it is an additive intervention and not a replacement for any other interventions.

-Valerie Nelson - 9:11 AM

Q: Do you feel this would also be worthwhile as people become fully vaccinated, with respect to understanding whether variants are infecting them, or they did not have a robust response to vaccination?-

-Jill Finnerty - 9:32 AM

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A: I believe that Katie addressed this during her remarks, but yes, we do believe that MassNotify will play an important role even as vaccination levels increase.-

-Libby Levison - 9:33 AM

Q: In Monday's call, EEA sped past a slide about towel/blanket groups that said "Towel/blanket groups increased to 15 from 10" but it didn't explain distancing and space between blankets. Where can we get more information? We are being asked if the Town Beach can open this year. Thanks, from Harvard MA-

-Mike Coughlin - 9:35 AM

A: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/safety-standards-for-coastal-and-inland-beaches-phase-iv-step-1-effective-32221/download->

-Aaron Langlois - 9:03 AM

Q: I am baffled with the recreational camp for children Covid guidelines. They are written as if we were reopening last June not a year later with vaccinations and #s improving around. Who was involved? Were Boards of Health or camp operators? -

-jenn robertson - 9:45 AM

A: The standards for overnight camps were drafted in review of CDC guidance, guidance in other sectors, as well as guidance drafted by the camp associations. Camp associations suggested a greater testing requirement than what is being required in current guidance. Testing is important for overnight camps since camps requested that campers in a "pod" be permitted to not mask or socially distance within their pod - something that is not permitted in other settings.-

-Bill Murphy - 9:38 AM

Q: Where do sport clusters fall in all clusters (ie. correction facilities, families, etc.)?-

-Catherine Brown - 9:47 AM

A: Sports clusters are higher than restaurants, social gatherings, and most work settings. There are fewer than in higher ed and child care-

-Betsy Kovacs - 9:45 AM

Q: What are the regulations for indoor yoga classes?-

-Michael Flanagan - 9:51 AM

A: Please see <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/safety-standards-and-checklist-fitness-centers-and-health-clubs->

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-Flor Amaya - 9:43 AM

Q: Hi Mike, for bar seating, the guidelines state " parties must be seated at bars (no standing customer service) and parties must be spaced at least 6 ft from other parties ", if restaurants place a plexiglass in between parties do they still have to maintain the 6ft separation?-

-Mike Coughlin - 9:56 AM

A: Hi Flor, Plexiglas separators between parties are not allowed. Parties seated at the bar must be at least six feet apart. -

-Gayle Nutile-Pimm - 9:59 AM

Q: if the dining is outside does that change the distance requirements?-

-Adam Kinney - 10:00 AM

A: No, there is no difference between indoor or outdoor dining for distance. -