

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH Webinar 6/1/2021



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 Courtney, and Katie Reilly, Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences, DPH
- Donna Quinn, Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management, DPH
- Michael Flanagan, Department of Labor Standards
- Helene Bettencourt, Anne Gilligan, and Anne Marie Stronach, 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
- Kristina Crandall, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Announcements:

DESE COVID-19 Guidance Updates: Districts and schools are required to continue core mitigation strategies this school year. I.e. Monitor symptoms and stay home when sick, wear masks, maintain hand hygiene, physical distance, and cohorts/assigned seating. Districts should review updates for guidance for outdoor activities and high school graduation (revised May 29th). [Supplemental guidance for student groups and school events](#): Effective 5/29, schools are encouraged, but no longer required, to abide by state gathering limits, state event guidance, and state theatre and performance venue guidelines. All other health and safety protocols outlined in the guidance document still apply. Vaccinated teachers do not have to wear masks outside. [Career/vocational tech education reopening guidelines](#): As of 5/29, vocational schools and programs are encouraged, but no longer required, to abide by state COVID-19 employee health protections, guidance, and prevention strategies (best practices, i.e. restaurants and close contact personal services). All other health and safety protocols outlined in the guidance document still apply, including early education and care safety requirements.

[Graduation guidance](#): 1) Capacity limits and operations—capacity limit (each graduate no more than 6 guests, and must register in advance of the graduation), guest and ticketing operations (only those registered can attend), contact tracing. 2) Distancing and masking requirements for indoor/outdoor ceremonies—maintain masking. 3) Hygiene protocols—maintain hand washing 4) Cleaning and disinfecting—follow CDC guidance and check for updated information. If in a high transmission area, may want to consider cleaning high touch areas.

Q: Why do they have to sit 6 ft apart during graduation but can sit 3 ft apart in classrooms?

A: 3 ft separation for classrooms and school bus only.

Q: Overhead fans allowed to be used during summer school?

A: Guidance exists about this. Very specific, it depends on what the building layout is, the direction in which the fan is facing, etc.

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Q: Should school districts still have staff and students get tested if they have symptoms?

A: Yes.

Q: Graduations held off campus?

A: They would need to follow and adhere to whatever information is provided by the independent venue.

Recreational Camps: Clarifying some questions that came in this morning.

Q: Recreational camps standards and protocols issued on 5/17, and went into effect last Friday, are they still valid or have they been rescinded?

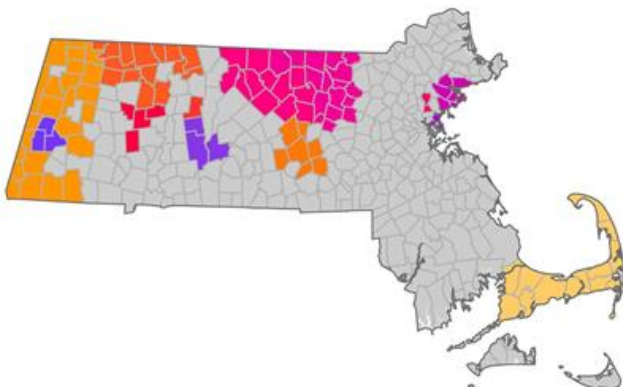
A: Still in effect for this camp season. One of the areas where we continue to have standards, like DESE and EEC. Camp standards are split around mandates and advised best practices.

Q: How is this handled, and how can they be enforced with the State of emergency being rescinded?

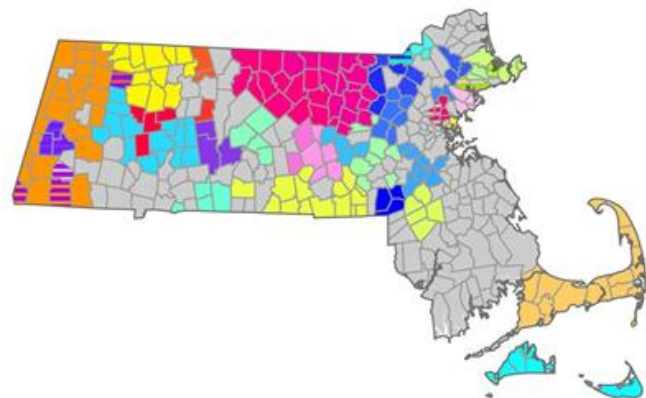
A: June 15th, State of Emergency will be lifted. This will be replaced with a Public Health Emergency statement, and this will include other references to standards to be in place for schools/camps/EEC programs and face coverings etc. Language about this doesn't exist yet. You can point to this to give you some standing around advised best practices. Anything "best practice" is not required, no enforcement or fines. The mandates, most of them apply to existing regulations, such as rec camp code (requirement to meet the staff ratio), some reportable disease regulations (isolation and quarantine of diseased individuals).

Public Health Excellence Grant Program: \$10M line item in FY2021 state budget for public health shared services. RFR was released in February to align with the recommendations of the Special Commission of Local and Regional Public Health--"Blueprint for Public Health Excellence" report (June 2019). Significant milestone in the effort to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the local public health system. Currently, 29 shared services arrangement representing 191 cities and towns will receive a total of \$7.7 M. 18 of the funded proposals are for new shared services arrangements. Over 100 cities and towns that are "standalone" municipalities for public health services are now part of plans for shared services. Pilot programs were released last year, but pandemic curtailed a lot of our efforts.

Shared Services – March 2021



Shared Services – June 2021



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For communities who missed the first opportunity to apply, the grant has reopened, approximately 5 additional awards will be made for up to \$300,000 each. RFR 214333 is posted on COMMBUYS. Application due 4 weeks from today.

Vaccine updates: Reminder that some COVID-19 vaccine lots are expiring. Watch the vaccine expiration dates, check with the manufacturers website to see if the date of the expiration has changed. If it has expired, dispose of it as medical waste, reduce the opportunity for administering the vaccine in error. If you are unsure about the expiration date, if you're checking on it and haven't had it verified, we advise that you package it together, put a very large note that says "Do not use". Pay attention to emails from the bulletins, they have updated information.

Homebound program: For communities doing in-home vaccinations for residents, as of June 1st all communities are now switched over to the state program. Anyone who calls you refer them to the [1-833-983-0485](tel:1-833-983-0485) number on the website. Vendor will go out to do the vaccinations. For in-home vaccinations, screening criteria was used to make sure it's for those who need significant assistance to get vaccinated. Now, if someone has a broken leg they can also be considered for the homebound program whereas before, they could not.

Pre-registration: Program is ending, things are transitioning to [mass vax finder](#).

Questions from Q&A answered out loud:

Q: Contact tracing—any update and if there will be any changes to the definition?

A: Hoping we can eventually treat COVID-19 as any other infectious disease. At this moment, we are still in a place in the pandemic where case investigation and contact tracing is still playing an important role. Vaccine uptake has been very good in Massachusetts, numbers are down, and we have reopened, but we still need to make sure that spread is mitigated. Contact tracing will not last forever, but for the moment this still remains one of our important public health tools.

Q: School water bubblers allowed to be turned on for students/staff?

A: Water bubblers are not all the same (some have water filling stations). Have a discussion about the building and if the water fountain is safe enough for all students, is it very busy? Some schools are allowing students to bring their own water. If you also do disinfection strategies then it could be okay to use the water fountains.

Q: Face coverings required in daycares?

A: Will get clarification on this.

Q: Quarantine for individuals vaccinated more than 3 months ago?

A: At this point, no time limit about having to quarantine vaccinated individuals. For those with natural immunity from disease, after 90 days they should be quarantined.

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Q: Congregate settings for meals at senior centers?

A: Guidance document exists, but the requirement to have the tables 6 ft apart is no longer in place. Recommend having some outdoor seating. If the local senior center wants to maintain the distancing, that's totally okay.

Q: Travel advisory changes?

A: No changes as of March 22nd.

Questions from Q&A not answered out loud:

-Michael Theroux - 3:02 PM

Q: Are the travel order and quarantine order still in effect for municipal employees who are not vaccinated? -

-Jana Ferguson - 3:09 PM

A: The travel advisory from March 22 is still in place; fully vaccinated individuals (who do not have symptoms) are exempt from the quarantine advisory. -

-Kristin Kennedy - 3:06 PM

Q: If the students can sit 3 feet apart in school, why do they have to sit 6 feet apart at indoor graduations with masks on? -

-Mike Coughlin - 3:13 PM

A: This question has been answered verbally.-

-Anne Gilligan - 3:13 PM

A: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/graduation-guide.pdf>-

-9788049534 Ketchen - 3:00 PM

Q: Are fans allowed in the classrooms? -

-Mike Coughlin - 3:16 PM

A: This question has been answered verbally.-

-Anne Gilligan - 3:34 PM

A: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/ventilation.html>-

-Joanne Belanger - 3:13 PM

Q: what about summer school? - same requirements as current school year? It will be hot and many schools do not have air conditioning.-

-Anne Gilligan - 3:16 PM

A: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/covid19-guide-updates.pdf>-

-Alicia Bryant - 3:16 PM

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Q: Has it been clarified if only close contact during recess does not require quarantine, or during any outdoor activity? -

-Jana Ferguson - 3:22 PM

A: only during recess-

-Michael Mendez - 3:20 PM

Q: Any update whether or not businesses still have to notify us of positive cases? Last week you said you would look more into this. -

-Jana Ferguson - 3:23 PM

A: They do not. That requirement was included in the sector specific standards, which have been rescinded. -

-Amy Langone - 3:11 PM

Q: Quabbin, BOH, with the lifting of mask guidance, are there rights for employees that cannot receive the COVID vaccine and so are at increased risk for COVID infection -

-Jana Ferguson - 3:25 PM

A: The mask guidance is in place and strongly recommends that people who are not vaccinated continue to wear a mask and stay socially distant from others. -

-Kylee Sullivan - 3:16 PM

Q: Can school water fountains be turned on for use by students/staff?-

-Anne Gilligan - 3:31 PM

A: This would be a local decision based on whether mitigation strategies can be maintained.-

-Pat Levine - 3:28 PM

Q: It does not appear the Sheffield and Great Barrington are not included in the Tri-town collaborative. Is this the case?-

-Ron O'Connor - 3:37 PM

A: Looks like a mapping error that we will review and correct.. Some municipalities were part of more than one applicaton - for different services.-

-Anita Arnum - 3:36 PM

Q: What is reason for D/C local BOH program??

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-Jana Ferguson - 3:42 PM

A: BOH were no longer routinely ordering after the two months that the local option was in place and most were seeing only one or two remaining individuals, which made it difficult to ship vaccine. This ensures a process stays in place for in-home vaccination. -

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-Jane Landry - 3:43 PM

Q: Please review fan use in public schools-

-Anne Gilligan - 3:45 PM

A: DESE recommends following the CDC guidance:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/ventilation.html>-

-Teresa Riley-Singh - 3:49 PM

Q: Also, can you clarify if there are any recommendations for senior centers, are most vulnerable age group during this pandemic-

-Mike Coughlin - 3:48 PM

A: <https://mcoaonline.com/scaling-up-document-from-oea/>-