

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH Webinar 9/10/2021



Inter-agency Staff on the Webinar

- Jana Ferguson, Assistant Commissioner, DPH
- Sam Wong, Erica Piedade, Michael Coughlin, and Rachael Cain, Office of Local and Regional Health, DPH
- Dr. Catherine Brown, Glynnis LaRosa, and Laurie Courtney, Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences, DPH
- Donna Quinn, Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management, DPH
- Anne Gilligan and Anne Marie Stronach, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Cheryl Sbarra, Massachusetts Association of Health Boards
- Dr. John Welch, Community Tracing Collaborative

Announcements:

CTC: Completely staffed up, finished hiring their cohort and have caught up on cases in the “awaiting outreach” queue. Most of the people being referred to the CTC are getting outreached within the 24-48 hour goal.

Licensure Orders Extension: Order of the Commissioner of Public Health ([Covid-19 Public Health Emergency Order No. 2021-6](#)) authorizing insurance of temporary licenses for certain providers and renewal and reactivation of certain temporary licenses (issued August 26, 2021). Order of the Commission of Public Health ([Covid-19 Public Health Emergency Order no. 2021-4](#)) extending certain licenses pursuant to an April 3, 2020 order of the Commission of Public Health (issued August 20th, 2021).

Covid-19 Booster Planning: The 3rd dose is currently approved as a part of a primary series for certain immunocompromised individuals. There is a list that has these groups. These groups are eligible to receive these doses now. They can go to any vaccinating provider who are offering these vaccines. The booster doses are for individuals who are not immunocompromised, this is something under consideration by the FDA and ACIP. The next FDA meeting about the booster is scheduled for Sept. 17th. We haven’t heard any clear details about booster doses. Survey results from local public health departments. If you don’t want to participate, please still reply:

COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Planning

Table 2. Administering COVID-19 booster

Will you offer COVID-19 booster doses at clinics in your community? (number of survey respondents)

Name of Town	(All)			
Regional Collaborative Status	Yes	No	Unsure	Did not respond to question
No - Not in Regional Collaborative	51	8	30	0
Yes - Part of Regional Collaborative	39	1	12	0
Grand Total	90	9	42	0

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We do not know when the criteria will be for when people can receive the booster, we've heard 8 months and also 5 months. This makes a huge difference in MA. This started with covid-facing providers, and the count starts after the second dose, if its an 8 month interval, there's around 800k people who are eligible at the beginning of this process. Most people who received this vaccine will probably want the booster. If it's a 5 month interval, this would be around 2.5 million people who would need the booster. We have a range of possibilities that are in play, and we are trying to plan for the scenario of 2.4 million but not really knowing what we will be facing. We will be encouraging people to get the booster, and they will not be required to get the booster at the same location they received it, but we need to follow the guidelines from the federal government. This is part of the capacity assessment we are doing with different providers (those that participated the first time around, and those who would be able to participate) across the Commonwealth. Also, since we shouldn't have problems with vaccine availability this time around with boosters, the approach will be different when working with providers.

Q: I know someone who got a booster shot at CVS who are not immunocompromised.

A: This is going to happen. People need to attest that they belong to an eligible group. This is a violation of MCVP and federal government, to misrepresent themselves and for providers to misadminister these doses. This is complicated, because no one really knows what their medical record is. What CDC and DPH have said is that if a provider orders something in an off label manner, certain protections for provider and receiving person *may* not apply.

Q: Records of people's immunizations.

A: The CDC card is not a required document, what is required is proof of vaccine. A printout from their provider about their immunization record is approved in Massachusetts. Local health departments can also provide verification documents through MIIS. We are developing a public facing portal where people can access and request an immunization record. We are hoping this will be available by the end of the month. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/requesting-a-copy-of-your-covid-19-vaccination-record>

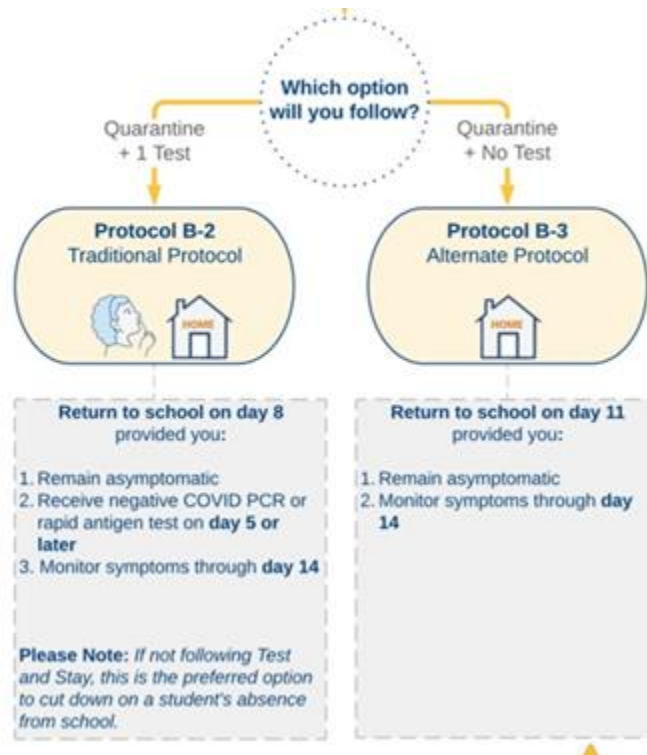
DESE—update on reporting positive cases and K-12 testing program: Data collection: Sept 13, beginning to collect positive data collecting form districts, education collabs, and approved special education schools. Any positive Covid-19 cases for students enrolled or staff employed must be reported to DESE. Districts will no longer call DESE to report positive case results and instead report cases through a Security Portal application. A webinar was held yesterday explaining this resource. This update is on the website. DESE will be publicly reporting cases on Thursday evenings along with pool testing data. Reports run from Thursday to Wednesday, and reporting ends at 5pm on Wednesday of each week. Reporting can be done as frequently as the district chooses (daily, weekly, etc.).

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Close contacts: In a school setting, it's defined as only those who have been within (less than) 6 ft of distance of the Covid-19 positive individual while INDOORS, for at least 15 minutes during a 24-hour period. In a classroom setting, it would be rare for an entire classroom to be considered a close contact of an infectious person. Districts should focus on this definition when determining which students need to participate in the Test and Stay program. Resources are finite, and over-identifying close contacts has a tangible impact on support time and test supply. Test and Stay: **Q**: Can individuals identified as a close contact while at home (i.e. non-school base close contact) return to school and participate in the Test and Stay program? **A**: No. The Program is only for school-based close contacts, only. This includes close contacts identified in after-school/weekend school-sponsored extracurricular activities and sports. Individuals identified as a close contact of an individual outside of school should follow Protocol B-2 or B-3 in the SY22 DESE/DPH Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios.



Q: School sponsored extracurricular on weekends, does this include football games etc.?

A: If they are participating in Test and Stay during the weekend, they are given e-meds and then they would need to produce those results prior to the activity, such as the coach or school personnel.

Q: What if the student is a close contact from a member of the football team who played on the weekend, are they eligible for Test and Stay?

A: Yes, because this is in a school setting. Similar to as if they were exposed during band or newspaper club.

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Q: Whether or not local health should collect close contacts for these events if they're outdoors/outdoor exposure?

A: Outdoor exposures, if you're within 6 ft for 15 min of a positive case, and it only happens in an outdoor setting, this is not considered an exposure and they are not close contacts that need to quarantine. If this is for a football game, the game itself is outdoors, but you also have to think about the locker rooms, the buses, and make sure you're doing the identification of close contacts in those settings.

Q: Pooled school testing?

A: Districts are at different phases about this. If you have a specific issue about your school district, check in with your district administration.

Q: If a non-immunized child was in a school yesterday, and they did a non-proctored at-home test, and they are positive, should local health departments wait for confirmed PCR or initiate school contact tracing?

A: DESE recommends that schools have the student tested and not have the student in school until there's clarity about the positive result. During this period, school officials can start gathering this information when its an at-home test.

Q: How was the 80% vaccination rate (in order to remove mask mandate) determined? Some communities are reacting to this requirement.

A: This information is not available right now during the webinar. We will follow up.

Q: Who is expected to follow up with the Test and Stay results and protocols during the weekend, for school related sports? School, coach?

A: This is being coordinated at the school local level. This would be the coach if it's during a game. The coach would be notified of who they needed to check about their status. If they are positive, they are not allowed to play. If they are falling within the dates, 7th day but it falls on a Saturday or Sunday, they still need to come in and get tested.

Q: For CT in schools, guidance says that close contacts within 6 ft, but are masked, are exempt from quarantine requirements? Should they only be quarantine if they're within three feet?

A: Yes. We haven't changed the definition of close contact, just the definition of who needs to quarantine and have the option to do the Test and Stay.

Additional DESE resources below:

- <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/testing/> (authorized school application, Covid-19 testing and eMed FAQs, webinar recordings and slides, consent forms and parent letters)
- <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop.html> (protocols for responding to Covid-19 scenarios. Protocols flowcharts.
- <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/faq/> (protocols and other reopening FAQs.)

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- <https://www.doe.mass.edu/commissioner/updates.html>

(Commissioner updates)

Questions answered out loud from the Q&A Chat: Some questions might be too specific to certain cases. Please reach out, because sometimes they may release too much medical information.

Chat questions not posted because of functionality issues. When I download chat text, original questions and all responses are not available.