

Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH Webinar 10/5/2021



Inter-agency Staff on the Webinar

- Jana Ferguson, Assistant Commissioner, DPH
- Sam Wong, Erica Piedade, Michael Coughlin, Rachael Cain and Aimee Petrosky, 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
- Chief Edward Dunne, Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association
- Jeff Farnsworth, Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
- Lealdon Langley and Ann Lowery, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
- Dr. John Welch, Community Tracing Collaborative

Announcements:

CTC: The last day to send cases to the CTC is Tuesday, November 30th. 8 weeks from today. Your Local Health Liaison (LHL) will be available through Thursday, December 30th. CRC will officially close on Friday, December 31st. We are creating some materials and resources with DPH to be shared on a rolling basis. Communicating your interest on these materials to the LHL would be helpful so we can get this out for you. Also, we can also share your job descriptions and postings with those who have worked at the CTC to see if they're good fits for your community.

COVID-19 Testing: Reminder on available resources. 456 sites that provide testing to the public. Sites can be found on the [state website](#) and are searchable by zip code, and give information whether they're free, offer testing for children, require appointments, etc. There are 25 Stop the Spread sites, and a new one opened yesterday in Ashland at the Commuter Station. The Commonwealth has provided close to 3 million tests at the Stop the Spread sites since it opened last summer. While wait times vary, the average wait time at a Stop the Spread site is less than 15 minutes.

Arbovirus Update: 2019 and 2020 mosquito seasons, we had a lot of EEE activity. We were anticipating the same this year. We've almost gotten through an entire season without EEE findings or evidence of an outbreak. Most likely explanation is 1) end of last year and into early spring, we had a pretty significant drought. This means that there was insufficient water in the hardwood swamps where EEE starts. These mosquito populations were not robust enough to support the virus. 2) The activity we saw in 2019 was so intense, I think we built up immunity in the bird population faster than normal. Since EEE is a bird virus, and if the bird is immune to it, then there is no circulation of the virus. We've hit bird-herd immunity. We've had 143 positive mosquito samples for West Nile Virus (WNV), 1 positive Alpaca, and 7 human cases. There will still be risk of WNV until the first hard frost, usually by mid-November. There was a EEE positive mosquito in Connecticut, but we've been doing surveillance across the Commonwealth. If there

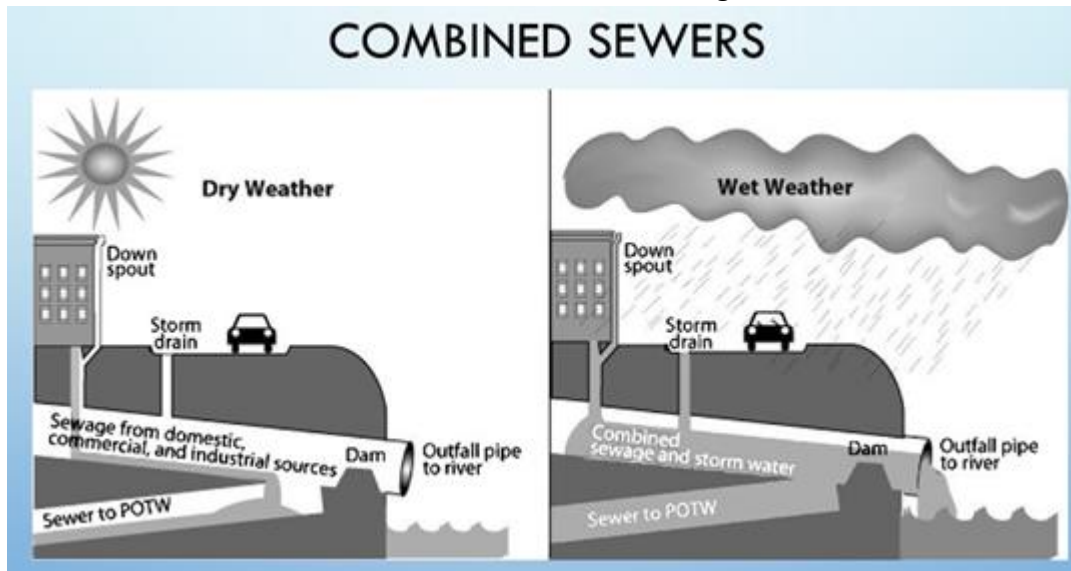
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is EEE activity late in the season, it could mean that maybe next year it could be active, but it's very unlikely this will affect humans at this point of the season. Testing of mosquitos stopped Friday, only a week earlier than it usually stops. We will continue to test specimens from people who have related symptoms. The lab had to stop to test for more COVID-19 samples.

Promoting Awareness of Sewage in Public Waters: Presenting a statute that was passed earlier in the year that will affect LBOH. Statute signed in January 2021, "[An Act Promoting Awareness of Sewage in Public Waters](#)." The new law will make sure the public knows when partially treated or untreated sewage flows into Massachusetts waters including: combined sewer overflows (CSO—untreated wastewater and stormwater discharges). Some discharges that discharge sewage into surface waters as a result of failures in collection systems (known as sanitary water overflows or SSO). For example, an overflow resulting from a sewage pump station failure. Also—stormwater overflow can also have dangerous effects.



There are 19 sewer authorities operating now that have CSO outfalls that at times discharge into various water bodies. An interactive map of the outfall locations can be found [here](#). Additionally, any municipality with a sewer system may be subject to the notification requirements for SSO discharges. Currently 199 of CSO in these 19 communities. First provision of the law: Required public advisory notification of discharge events issued by sewer authorities, posted on their websites, and sent directly to a number of specified entities including: MassDEP, MDPH, the LBOH where the discharge is occurring, municipalities potentially affected by the discharge, local press, and interested individual stakeholders and organizations that sign up to receive notifications. MassDEP worked with DPH on draft regulations. Section "F" of the Act requires MassDEP to consult with DPH to establish standards for when LBOH must issue "Public Health Warnings" in response to a discharge event. MassDEP

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consulted DPH and is seeking input from a wide variety of stakeholders, including LBOH to inform regulatory development. Regulations were released yesterday (Oct 4) for public comment, and written public comment is also available. Roles of LBOH: The law requires the LBOH to utilize the municipalities existing notification system, including, if available, reverse 911 emergency calls. The warning shall include: the location, date and time of the discharge or overflow, recommendation that the public avoid contact with affected water bodies for at least 48 hours after a sewage discharge or overflow, and contact information for LBOH or Health Department. Also, post or cause to be posted a temporary sign(s) at conspicuous access locations in municipalities directly affected by the discharge or overflow (ex. public beaches, boat docks). Signs shall read: “Warning! Avoid contact with water—may cause illness” and display an infographic showing no fishing, boating, or swimming. Reason for the warning is potential for sewage in surface water. Public health warnings and temporary signage shall be translated in the language(s) most appropriate for those neighborhoods. Next steps: proposed draft regulations were released yesterday, please check this [MassDEP webpage](#) for more information about the act, the regulations, and [the public comment process](#).

Public-hearings Page: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massdep-public-hearings-comment-opportunities> Public hearings on Oct 27 at 1:00 pm and 6:00 pm. MassDEP is seeking comment on issues affecting LBOH: Which events require issuance of a public health warning, temporary signage during active events, the content of public health warnings, methods for effectively conveying the warning for people most at risk, the practical ability of LBOH to effectuate the public health warning and temporary signage requirements. Contacts: Lealdon Langley, Director, MassDEP Division of Watershed Management lealdon.langley@mass.gov Susy King, Chief NPDES/Surface Water Discharge Program Susannah.King@mass.gov

Q: How frequent are these sanitary sewage overflow events?

A: Not very frequent. 200 municipalities that have some type of sewer systems and conveyances/pipe systems, and not all of these have a wastewater treatment plant but they may be served by collection system. These occur when there’s some type of failure of the collection system. Although these are not frequent, they can occur at any time. CSO happen frequently enough. During wet weather, we receive multiple notifications of those discharges.

Q: These CSO events, are they the sewer authorities’ responsibility to notify the municipality?

A: They are required to notify the municipality where the discharge occurred, and also required to contact municipalities that are affected by the discharge. This part of the statute is a bit tricky—trying to figure out how to best determine the communities that may be affected. This is one of the areas for public comment we are looking for feedback on.

Q: If the affected property is owned by the state, will DCR or another state agency have the responsibility over the site and post the warning? State parks is an example.

A: We have built in provisions in the regulations that have these state entities that manage recreational resources that may be affected by these discharges to have the responsibility for posting.

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Q: Is there any requirement for the sewer authority to post the warning signs?

A: In the statute, requirement for the sewer authority to post permanent signs at the outfalls. Temporary signage is to be directed by LBOH at locations where recreational resources or where the public may be exposed.

Q: Is there any funding from the statutory change for LBOH to implement this new role for local health?

A: This statute does not have provisions for funding, but there was a companion piece for the environmental bond bill that offered some type of funding. We are looking into how to access these funds and how to best utilize these funds.

Other updates:

Newest member of the OLRH team: Amy Petrosky, Director of Performance Standards. 10 years combined in Local Public Health.

Vaccine planning for 5 – 11 years old: Given that we don't have a lot of information/or specific information around pediatric vaccine approvals, we have been doing preliminary planning and learning that Pfizer anticipates submitting some data to FDA. We understand there are some scheduled meetings for different items, maybe a vote for approval for pediatric vaccine. We've heard rumors about approval by the end of October? Thanksgiving? Lots of these children can get their vaccination at their pediatrician offices. A link was sent out to any possible vaccine provider to get a sense of where people might be interested in doing vaccinations. This information is still coming in. As of last night, we've heard from 74 health departments, response rate of 34%, and over half of these have indicated they are interested in at least doing some vaccination of children in this group. Some with a capacity to do less than 100 doses a week, and some for more than 100 doses a week. Not really about hosting long-standing COVID-19 clinics. Please fill out this survey if you haven't yet so we can have a better idea of where we stand.

Dr. Brown: Aware that the difference between what we do for outside of school and for in-school settings can be confusing and complicated. DPH and DESE have worked together to determine this guidance. As you are working through situations, just a reminder to refer to the DESE documents.

Dr. Wong: DESE will provide an update next week on school COVID-19 protocol.

Questions answered out loud from the Q&A Chat:

Q: Can private schools have free access to BinaxNOW from the state?

A: If they would like to participate in the Test and Stay program, the information is on the website. You will have to fill out and complete the application process. Currently being managed by the CIC contract. Questions can be directed to k12covid19testing@mass.gov

Q: How are positive COVID-19 home tests being logged in MAVEN?

A: It depends. In general, tests that are purchases over the counter and done at home, there is no way to report into MAVEN. If someone calls and says they were positive from the at-home

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test, give them information about isolation and to notify their close contacts.

Close contacts that have questions can go to the website for additional information.

Q: Any resources for administering flu vaccines to homebound populations?

A: To Jana from Laurie Courtney-Are the mobile programs available to help with flu? Jana: Mobile programs are meant for COVID-19 vaccines. But, this is all managed within BIDLS and see if there are resources for this. We'll get back to you.

Questions not answered out loud from the Q&A Chat:

-michelle borrello - 3:06 PM

Q: is the stop the spread pcr testing-

-Sam Wong - 3:10 PM

A: Yes-

-susan sarni - 3:23 PM

Q: Where is the list of the 19 sewer authorities by town?-

-Lealdon Langley - 3:50 PM

A: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/combined-sewer-overflow-permittees-in-massachusetts->

-Pat Maloney - 3:20 PM

Q: Would a stream or a pond on private property qualify under this new regulation?-

-Lealdon Langley - 3:55 PM

A: If the water body is totally encompassed by private property with no public access, i do not believe that it would. But keep in mind that the public and the Commonwealth often have certain rights for flowing water bodies such as streams. The question is difficult to answer without specific examples.-

-4134461170 Martin - 3:31 PM

Q: How about requiring the sewer plant to post these warnings-

-Lealdon Langley - 3:59 PM

A: The statute is specific to the public health warnings to be issued by the BOH/Health Dept. I don't think there would be any prohibition on a cooperative relationship between the permittee/sewer authority and the BOH if the permittee would agree to do that posting-