

# Norfolk County-8 Coalition

MDPH/LBOH Webinar 11/16/2021



## Inter-agency Staff on the Webinar

- Jana Ferguson, Assistant Commissioner, DPH
- Sam Wong, Erica Piedade, Michael Coughlin, Rachael Cain, Aimee Petrosky, and Phyllis Williams-Thompson, Office of Local and Regional Health, DPH
- Dr. Catherine Brown, Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences, DPH
- Alison Cohen, Communications Office, 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
- Dr. John Welch, Community Tracing Collaborative

### Announcements:

**Vaccine communications resources:** Post a message to your LBOH city/town website and social media. I.e. "Hello Arlington: Our COVID-19 vaccination clinic is 11/17 at the High School. No appointment, ID, or insurance needed." Put up posters in high traffic areas, place inserts in bulletins/local newspapers, use our [Trust the Facts kit](#)—with posters, door hangers, social media, graphics and more. Many materials are available in 12 languages and templates can be edited. For booster shots, please go to [www.mass.gov/covid19booster](http://www.mass.gov/covid19booster) For pediatric vaccine, please go to [www.mass.gov/covidvaccinekids](http://www.mass.gov/covidvaccinekids) All materials are created using market research done in Massachusetts.

**Q:** How do you know that the campaigns have been effective?

**A:** The vendor we work with on the Trust the Facts campaign, they track the number of times people click/like/engage, how many seconds/minutes they spend on different parts of the website, and this is how we see if they're working.

**COVID-19 positivity rate:** This rise in positivity rate isn't unexpected, we were concerned this could happen. The vaccines are still doing what they're meant to—reduce the risk of severe illness. Hospitals have been indicating that capacity is limited, not because of large number of COVID-19 patients, but simply because they had a higher hospital admission rates. Continue to encourage existing mitigation strategies.

**Q:** Is there more testing going on that leads to more cases being counted?

**A:** Yes, but when you have an increase in testing and the case rate to be the same, you expect the percent positivity rate to go down, but even with the increase in testing the percent positivity is going up.

**Q:** Have you started seeing any cases of COVID-19 in people who have received a booster?

**A:** Yes, but the ones we are familiar with are those who had a recent booster dose.

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**Q:** Can a fully vaccinated close contact who has developed symptomatic disease spread that to others?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** What is the proportion of unvaccinated v vaccinated in hospitalizations and death?

**A:** Changes week-to-week. But more helpful data would be percentage of those vaccine  
Of all vaccinated people 1.3% have gotten COVID-19, and

**Q:** Have there been any clusters in schools that have removed their face covering requirements?

**A:** No that we're aware of as of today.

**Q:** Data from P-town include Delta variant?

**A:** Of all samples sequenced in the P-town outbreak, all but one was the Delta variant.

**Reminder-De-escalation virtual training for local public health:** Over 100 people joined the training yesterday and reviews have indicated the usefulness and timeliness of the event. Another opportunity to join will be on Wednesday, December 8<sup>th</sup> from 10 am – 11:30 am. CEUs are available. Questions? Ask Erica Piedade at [erica.m.piedade@mass.gov](mailto:erica.m.piedade@mass.gov)

**CTC and contact tracing transition:** CTC will cease taking new case referrals on November 30, 2021. CTC case work will be completed for referred cases by December 17. Local Health Liaisons will be available through the end of December.

### **Other updates:**

-DPH Mobile vaccination program is still scheduling vaccines for pediatric/school based or all ages/boosters. This is running about 2 weeks lead time; they are booking into early December. Give them at least 2 weeks notice from the time you put the request in to the date of the clinic.

-Vaccine ordering schedule—next week is Thanksgiving, because of the holiday we anticipate there will be delivery and shipping delays. If you want vaccine for anything for November 26<sup>th</sup> or so, you need to order your vaccine by tomorrow on MIIS. This is for any vaccine. When you order vaccine the turnaround time is usually 5 days. People tend to receive their ancillary kits sooner than their vaccines.

-No webinar next week! Thanksgiving holiday.

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

-Amy McInerney - 3:10 PM

Q: Where on the website can we find these flyers? Thanks in advance!-

-Mike Coughlin - 3:13 PM

A: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/trust-the-facts-get-the-vax->

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-15082788600 Tapscott - 3:06 PM

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Q: I often wonder about how effective social media is in reaching the public.

You say it has been effective. How do you know? -

-Alison Cohen - 3:15 PM

A: Order free materials from our Clearinghouse:

<https://massclearinghouse.ehs.state.ma.us/>-

-Jana Ferguson - 3:17 PM

A: What is the link to the dashboard?

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-15082788600 Tapscott - 3:13 PM

Q: thanks for answering the question so well! -

-Alison Cohen - 3:17 PM

A: And here's the full toolkit! <https://www.mass.gov/doc/creative-materials-toolkit-trust-the-facts-get-the-vax/download->

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-Lauren McDonald - 3:17 PM

Q: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting->

-Jana Ferguson - 3:18 PM

A: Thank you!-

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-wendy machmuller - 3:22 PM

Q: Does the State have any specific guidelines for people to wear masks indoors WHILE exercising at the gym, in a yoga studio, etc.-

-Jana Ferguson - 3:22 PM

A: We do not. These were removed in May.-

-Jana Ferguson - 3:24 PM

A: Well, with the exception of people who are unvaccinated or immuno-compromised or live with someone who is. We do recommend face coverings for those individuals. .-

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-wendy machmuller - 3:25 PM

Q: OK thank you, Jana. This is what I thought. So it is just local jurisdictions that put these indoor mask rules in place. -

-Jana Ferguson - 3:26 PM

A: That's correct.-

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-Colleen Fermon - 3:30 PM

Q: How would we know a small percent of vaccinated people gets covid if we are not recommend testing for those who are exposed?-

-Catherine Brown - 3:32 PM

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A: Good question Colleen - but we also see this in national data from other states who are doing testing in vaccinated people-

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-Susan Avallone - 3:32 PM

Q: I have a nonpublic school that removed facemasks in October and are on remote learning from a cluster-

-Jana Ferguson - 3:34 PM

A: Can you please report this to DESE?-

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-Susan Avallone - 3:34 PM

Q: even if nonpublic-

-Jana Ferguson - 3:34 PM

A: Yes-

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-tracy gagnon - 3:25 PM

Q: Is the CDC recommendation 5 days after exposure-

-Catherine Brown - 3:41 PM

A: 5-7 days after - I would recommend 3-5 days in order to catch people early in their infection and stop transmission-

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-Jill Connolly - 3:30 PM

Q: I understand the question about the testing of exposed fully vaccinated, as the CDC recommends that these individuals get tested 5-7 days after close contact with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. It is difficult for people to keep track when there are differing recommendations.-

-Catherine Brown - 3:42 PM

A: I don't disagree but it is important to be thoughtful about what we recommend for people. Requiring testing is a burden for people - they have to find a test, maybe pay for an OTC one, schedule time off work to go to a testing site, etc.-

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-Rachael Belisle-Toler - 3:32 PM

Q: Hello! I am helping out at our vaccine clinics and we are actively promoting vaccines in the area. In Gloucester, almost 50 percent of our 65 or so cases are fully vaccinated folks. I understand that the rates will fluctuate throughout the state, but are we seeing these rates anywhere else among vaccinated people?-

-Catherine Brown - 3:44 PM

A: That is higher than what we see statewide. Cases in unvaccinated people are 4-5 times higher than in vaccinated ones. I suspect this has something to do with the population of people you are seeing cases in.-

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-Joanne Belanger - 3:43 PM

Q: Erica - was there a survey that went out after the training yesterday? I didn't see one. Also how do we get CEU's?-

-Erica Piedade - 3:45 PM

A: @Joanne, I will make sure you receive it. Once you send it in we will send you the certificate for the CEUs.-

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-Marina Lent - 3:34 PM

Q: is overdispersion still playing a large role in delta transmission? or is delta more steady-state transmission among households and workplaces etc-

-Catherine Brown - 3:45 PM

A: I would say overdispersion. There are definitely places where transmission seems to occur more easily than in other similar places. Maybe a particularly highly infectious individual?

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-Sandra Martin - 3:41 PM

Q: training was excellent, well worth the time and it was engaging-

-Erica Piedade - 3:46 PM

A: @Sandra - thank you!-

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-Kay Petersen - 3:35 PM

Q: If MA doesn't recommend testing of asymptomatic close contacts, doesn't that mean that the reported number of infections in vaccinated people is lower than the true number, perhaps significantly lower?-

-Catherine Brown - 3:47 PM

A: We are looking at national data and our data compared to national data does not suggest that that is happening. Unvaccinated people nationally are about 5 times more likely to get COVID than vaccinated folks and we see similar numbers-

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-Julia Pingitore - 3:37 PM

Q: I recently had a situation involving a cluster in an elementary school. I contacted the on-call epi for guidance, communicated this to the school and the school then contacted DESE for confirmation, but DESE provided different guidance. Ultimately this undermines our credibility at the local level when we can't all get on the same page. How can we improve this so that DESE and DPH are providing the same guidance?-

-Catherine Brown - 3:48 PM

A: DESE and DPH do try to align guidance. If you have a particular situation where the guidance differs, please let DESE and DPH know and we can coordinate-

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-janet guertin-moruzzi - 3:39 PM

Q: Will there be any updated guidance on hockey? We are seeing a large numbers of cases in the hockey community again. As you know, they play on Thank you in advance. -

-Catherine Brown - 3:49 PM

A: At this point we do not anticipate additional sports specific guidance-

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-Marina Lent - 3:51 PM

Q: We are seeing what Gloucester is seeing. some weeks it is closer to 60-65% vaccinated among our cases. P'town study showed breakthrough, that couldn't be attributed to waning immunity post-vaccination. It irritates me when messaging implies that boosters will make it possible to consider vax the single magic bullet without other NPIs especially VENTILATION indoors-

-Catherine Brown - 3:53 PM

A: I agree with you