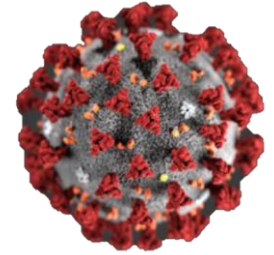


New Hampshire Coronavirus Disease 2019 Weekly Call for School Partners



Agenda:

- Opening Remarks – Dr. Ben Chan, Dr. Elizabeth Talbot, Dr. Beth Daly
- Q&A – To ask a question, use the Q&A feature in Zoom
 - Hover over bottom of Zoom screen to find “Q&A”
 - This is a public call, be careful about what you share (no confidential/sensitive information)
 - Ask general questions, individual consultation should be directed to the Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at 603-271-4496 (ask for a public health staff members)

K-12 School Re-Opening Question & Answer Session

**NH Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS)
Division of Public Health Services (DPHS)**

July 24, 2020

Monday's School Nurse Presentation (7/20)

NH DHHS presentation to school nurses (audio recording and PowerPoint slides):

<https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/commissioner/covid-19>

New CDC Guidance and Resources

CDC posted new school guidance & resources:

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

Purpose of This Call

- During the call on Monday there were over 120+ comments and questions that came in from school nurses
- We are going to attempt to categorize and address most of the questions and concerns
- We are recording this so that we can take the presentation and develop an extensive FAQ document

Introduction

- Re-opening schools and allowing in-person learning is a difficult balancing of risks and benefits
- Risks vary by community, and risk-tolerance is going to vary by community and by the person – that's what makes this so challenging
- Goal: minimize the risks for COVID-19, and maximize the educational experience

Topic: Screening and Exclusion (1)

- Can you please provide questions for the screenings so that it is the same across the state?
- Will there be any PSA's for parents to keep home ANY ill student? Not sending ill students to school?
- Are symptoms and temperature screening of students to be recorded in student records?
- How are we supposed to screen students and staff when we have over 500?
- Not clear why staff need to be screened at building, but relying on parents to screen students?
- If we have parents checking temps at home do we only recheck if they show up with symptoms or do you recommend that everyone be tested again when arriving at school?
- Temperature and questioning is recommended for the parent to do prior to coming to school or getting on the bus. How will we get this information daily?
- Is there a digital means or an app possible that parents could enter the information to be retrieved by the school nurse?
- Are there any studies on mass temp taking, reliability of non-touch thermometers?

Topic: Screening and Exclusion (2)

- Since the symptoms are so varied/broad can you provide guidance for school nurses for when a student should be sent home? How many symptoms does a person have to present with to be "sent home"? If a student has a runny nose are they to be sent home?
- Are we to differentiate for a person's "normal" daily symptoms, i.e. seasonal allergies vs. possible COVID symptoms?
- Who will set the guidelines for when a student can return to school who show any type of symptoms? Do they require a negative test if they want to come back before the 10-day time period that is recommended by the CDC?
- Could you please confirm my understanding of the following: If a student is sick with ANY of the symptoms of COVID-19, they should be tested, and remain out of school (and isolated) until the test results come back. If they are positive, they go by the 10/3 rule to come back to school/out of isolation [now the 10/1 rule]. If it's negative, we could let them come back as long as they follow our regular exclusion of ill students/staff policy? (i.e., fever free for 24 hours, no vomiting/diarrhea, etc).

Topic: Screening and Exclusion (3)

- If a student is sent home, evaluated by their HCP, and determined to not have COVID-19, can they return to school even with their mild runny nose?
- Will proof be required before reentering school that they've been tested and are negative?
- If improved sx, but not completely resolved, they are ok if still continuing to cough as long as improved?
- The logistics of tracking all kids sent home, when they come back, and keeping them out will need much more effort than we can do alone as school nurses.
- If I dismiss a student home with symptoms of COVID, do I need to dismiss siblings of that student if the sibling is symptom-free? Or just after a positive test is reported? Is that classroom closed immediately? Or after a positive test is reported?
- Do we need to notify admin with student's names who presented with COVID symptoms daily? Is so, how does this affect confidentiality?

Topic: Testing

- Should students and staff be tested for COVID prior to school reentry? And then follow up with daily screenings?
- Will there be testing readily available for kids and staff that have suspected symptoms?
- Accessible and rapid testing will be key if children are not to miss school unnecessarily. What will be our statewide system? Will NH have enough tests to administer? What is the current turnaround time for testing?
- Are primary care providers being prepared for this mass influx of students for testing?
- Our local pediatricians aren't automatically testing people for COVID. They are saying to stay home and then go to the ED if respiratory issues. Is that going to change?
- After testing, should there be a second test? I've seen the first test come back negative and 3-5 days later, test positive.
- I've read that up to 30% of tests give false negatives. Is this still the case? If so, even if the child tests, they might be positive and receive a negative result. What about false positives?
- Is research still showing that tests will only test positive while virus is shedding?
- Is the state looking at pooled testing for buildings and will there be municipal sewage testing to monitor for outbreaks?

Topic: Isolation and Quarantine

- Can we keep several students in one isolation room sitting six feet apart with a divider of some sort? Are curtains (plastic or cloth) adequate for separation?
- What about keeping window open to ventilate when in isolation?
- Who needs to quarantine if exposed? School nurses? Other staff and students in classrooms and hallways? For students in pre-K, special Ed and kindergarten, they will be moving around the room and not sitting in an assigned seat for the whole time at school. Would you recommend keeping the whole class home for quarantine if there is a student who is positive?
- Subs will be traveling throughout a variety of districts – will they need to quarantine for two weeks after each school they sub for?
- Is there an exception for private car travel for parents who are staff transporting child to college out of NE do they have to isolate for 14 days?

Topic: Public Health Contact Tracing

- Will NH DHHS notify the schools in the district if a child under 18 tests positive?
- Who is going to be responsible for contact tracing?
- Is there extra staff on public health to handle the increased calls and investigations from schools?
- Do you have a surveillance plan for schools this fall?

Topic: School Closure

- We have low-to-no community transmission in our town & surrounding towns. What should our threshold be for closing school in response to community transmission? [Working at a small, independent school (K-8). We are planning for 6' desk spacing, masks for all]

Topic: Transmission, Air Filtration Systems, Medical Treatments, Other

- Your thoughts on the large recently published South Korea study finding that children 10 and older can spread the virus at least as well as adults? What implications does this have with partial to full reopening of schools and the current relatively low NH infection, hospitalization, and death rates?
- Should we not be doing nebulizer treatments for asthma? Nebulizers & inhalers without a chamber cannot be administered in school?
- Any suggestions on placing portable HEPA filters in the health office and any classroom where there is low air flow/circulation?
- Should districts review HVAC systems (both for cooling in the early fall and heating in the winter) to determine if air circulation will spread droplets?
- Can fans be used to exhaust outside?
- Our schools do not have AC. The 5th floor is unbearably hot in September, without masks. No fans?
- What about kids who vape? Does this increase spread of the virus?

Topic: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Where are we getting PPE? Will we have enough to open? Will there be a stable supply chain for NH needs? Is funding available for PPE?
- Please define "surgical masks". Most masks available for purchase state that they are "non medical". Are these adequate for staff/students?
- Should nurses be wearing N95 when assessing symptomatic students or while in isolation room?
- Fit testing for N95? In the hospital setting nurses need to be fit tested to make sure N95 masks fit properly. Is that going to be provided for all school nurses? How often do we change the masks between symptomatic kids?
- What is the increased risk for a classroom if a teacher were to use a face shield while physically distanced with all students masked vs. all being masked? In this scenario, if the teacher came within 6 feet of a student (i.e., to help them with a math problem) they would put on a mask. If this is not idea/acceptable, have you seen any efficacy studies on the masks that have a clear "window" in the mouth area?
- What is the proper guidance for staff who are pregnant, PPE-wise?

How Should You Manage a Student/Staff Who Has Symptoms of COVID-19?

- Mask the symptomatic person (covering nose and mouth)
- Place the symptomatic person in a private room with the door closed if safe to do so (at a minimum they should be separated from others)
- Record the symptomatic person's temperature
- Perform a brief assessment of the person's complaints or symptoms
- Keep any assessment brief and stay at least 6 feet away, to the extent possible
- If in the same room as the person, the nurse should wear a **surgical face mask**. Also wear **eye protection** (goggles or face shield) if within 6 feet for brief periods of time, or if the person is unable to wear a face mask
- If prolonged close contact (within 6 feet of the person) is anticipated (including contact with the person's secretions/excretions), then wear all appropriate PPE: surgical face mask, disposable gown, gloves, and eye protection
- Send the symptomatic person home by private transportation

Topic: Cloth Face Coverings/Masks (1)

- What kind of information/data can we bring to our administrators to advocate for masks for all (K-8), so our teacher-cohort feel comfortable returning to school? Some teachers or their family members are immunocompromised. We plan for mask break during nap time, recess, and PE.
- You mentioned distancing is not the only way to protect, why no face coverings in classrooms if they are only 3 feet apart? If we need to use 3 foot distancing shouldn't masks be worn for kids greater than 2 years old?
- May students remove masks at desks 6 feet apart but not at 3 feet apart?
- Please elaborate on your statement regarding face covering use in younger children "risks [may] outweigh the benefits". What are the risks?
- What are recommendations for "mask breaks"? where should students and staff put their masks? Does it increase infection risk if student taking mask on and off (lunchtime, etc.)?

Cloth Face Coverings – Classrooms

- Use of cloth face coverings in classrooms is left to the decision of local school districts:
 - Younger children (2 years of age or older) may have difficulty consistently and correctly wearing cloth face coverings
 - Work with younger children to get compliance
 - Older students can be expected to wear cloth face coverings more consistently
- Consider cloth face coverings in the context of other layers of protection and ability to social distance, cohort students, limit mixing between students, etc.
- Students and staff who can consistently wear cloth face coverings should

Topic: Cloth Face Coverings/Masks (2)

- Are there any true medical conditions that would preclude a student or staff member from wearing a mask in school?
- Will healthcare providers be encouraged by the State of NH NOT to write letters allowing a person to not have to wear a mask?
- What should a school do if a student refuses to comply with safety measures such as wearing a mask?
- What is the messaging to staff/parents/guardians/students if they choose to not wear a mask?
- Should masks be mandated in order to enter school?

Topic: Physical Distancing

- If we are still going by the 6 feet rule why are we allowing desks to be 3 feet apart? Standards for restaurants and other businesses has been 6 feet. Teachers are not comfortable with the change from 6 feet to 3 feet in the classroom setting.
- I saw that Pediatric Physician Association is saying 3-6 ft. Which is accurate?
- How many square feet is needed per child if they are to stay 6ft apart? What about buses using the 6ft model?
- Are there any studies available if effective distance for children? Was the Lancet study based on adults or children?
- I understand no singing like choir, but can younger kids sing through their masks? This is a big part of classroom learning in young grades.

Topic: Sports and Physical Education

- How do we conduct PE? Keeping students in classroom cohorts will require PPE indoors during bad weather? If sports are discouraged due to risks, how do we do this?
- What about use of playground equipment?
- It is not quite clear to me from the “Safer at Home Amateur and Youth Sports Guidance” what happens during game play. It seems unsafe for athletes to be masked. Would regular soccer playing be considered “close contact” if the player was in a game from another New England school? We are having our players be in their own “pod” at school, for safety’s sake. If a team pod remained masked and 6’ away from everyone out of their pod while not actively playing, could we consider this relatively “safe”?

Is It Safe to Conduct Extra-Curricular Activities?

- Depends on the extra-curricular activity, location (e.g., indoors vs. outdoors), and ability to maintain physical distancing
- There should be no physical contact (at this stage in the pandemic)
- Avoid high-risk crowded situations (e.g., locker rooms)
- Anything that requires forced breathing (e.g., playing a wind instrument) or vocal cord vibration (e.g., singing) may need additional precautions

Other Guidance That May Apply

- Amateur & Youth Sports:

<https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt381/files/inline-documents/2020-05/guidance-amateur-youth-sports.pdf>

- Health & Fitness:

<https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt381/files/inline-documents/2020-05/guidance-health-fitness.pdf>

- Libraries:

<https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt381/files/files/inline-documents/guidance-libraries.pdf>

- Community Arts & Music Education:

<https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt381/files/files/inline-documents/guidance-arts-music-education.pdf>

- Performing Arts:

<https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt381/files/files/inline-documents/guidance-performing-arts-venues.pdf>

Topic: Special Education

- Should OT/PT services wear gowns for routine work with students?
- Please guide us in the need and use of face shield for smaller children, hearing impaired and lip readers.
- All of our students are unmasked special needs kids. They cough, sing, and scream, etc. spontaneously. Do all staff need eyewear when closer than 6 ft?
- My special needs kids are not able to wear masks at all, have significant difficulty with oral secretions, behavior, biting etc. Also will not stay in assigned seats. Cohort size given this?
- 8 kids sharing one stall bathroom, one right after the other. All unmasked special needs kids. Concerns?

Topic: Cleaning and Disinfection

- How do you feel about hypochlorous acid fogger machines to clean classrooms?

Additional Q&A (if time)

- Regular call with schools every Friday, 12:00-1:00 pm
 - Zoom link: <https://nh-dhhs.zoom.us/j/98062195081>
 - Call-in phone number: (646) 558-8656
 - Meeting ID: 980 6219 5081
 - Passcode: 197445