



## OBSERVER REPORT

**BOARD OF HEALTH:** 11/24/20 LWVM Observer - Thomas Krueger  
Members in Attendance via Zoom : Andrew Petty, Todd Belf-Becker, Sec. Andrea Flaxer, Michelle Gottlieb, Helaine Hazlett

Meeting Posted 48 hrs in advance

Meeting held in a Handicapped Accessible Location - not applicable

Public allow to Participate in the Meeting - yes via Zoom.

Minutes of 11/2/20 and 11/10/20 approved

### **COVID UPDATE:**

Andrew presented the latest from the governor re travel guidance for college students, i.e., that they should have a negative COVID test 72 hours before travel. The guidance was for both residential and off campus students. If a student tests positive, he/she should stay isolated at the college for 10 days. If quarantined, each should stay on campus until completing 14 days; as alternative, if the student has a negative test on day 8 and is asymptomatic, they can leave after 10 days. Other possible options were also presented.

For selected schools (at this time high risk ones), MA has just started offering the Abbot Antigen test at no cost with a result available within 15 minutes. (A later question was asked when this could be rolled out to MHD - this has not been discussed yet.) This would allow testing and identification of symptomatic students more quickly. This testing would require parental consent.

Another recent update on quarantine guidelines has changed so that previously individuals quarantined for 14 days (a time also needed to contact tracing) could on day 8 with a negative PCR test and no symptoms leave quarantine on day 10 vs day 14.

Andrew let all know that all the information is available on the state website, [mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov), including the daily dashboard of cases, deaths, etc. There is also a weekly update done every Thursday. For MHD a case report (available on the town website, [marblehead.org](https://www.marblehead.org)) for the past week is generated each Thursday, available on Friday. This report includes case count, disease activity, deaths, cases by age group for the past 14 days, # of tests in past 14 days, and percent positive.

In re the COVID vaccine, Andrew noted the two recently announced results from Pfizer and Moderna, and said we could be seeing distribution on a limited basis in December of early January. It will be a phased release as there are limited number of doses - perhaps to emergency personnel, hospital personnel, etc.

There are many resources one can access for questions and help about COVID, especially concerning mental issues: phone MA 211; crisis counseling at 888-215-4125; Red Cross Virtual Family Assistance Center. And again, there are more resources on [mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov). (For help at the Marblehead Counseling Center and appointment is needed.) DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) has info on its website about COVID in schools.

As to where to get tested for COVID, again the website, [mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov), has a test site locator with additional information about hours, appointment, etc.

A question about **food insecurity**: Andrew said that the food pantries are open and active, and the schools are providing meals that can be taken home. Anyone can go there for these.

For Thanksgiving, Andrew reiterated the recommendations for a safe holiday. The preferred, safe option is to have Thanksgiving with the people you are currently living with. Other ideas included: hosting virtual Thanksgiving dinners, preparing traditional recipes and delivering to friends, family, etc. He then listed some guidelines for those considering an “expanded” holiday: keep the group small, be aware of the MA travel order re testing and quarantining, wear a mask, wash hands frequently, stay 6 feet apart, consider high risk individuals, keep visits short, etc. A CODE RED phone call to MHD resident covers all these recommendations. Andrew reminded all that you need to SIGN UP on the MDH website for this service.

A board member then asked a question regarding a student testing positive while at school (e.g. college). Andrew said that MHD would get the test result, but the school would be responsible. If by chance a student returns to MHD and is

positive, the MHD HD would interview to see if the case was contracted here or at school. The case is “counted” at the school, if acquired at school and at MHD acquired if here. The overriding process is that the student continues to be tracked whether here or at school; this is also needed for disease surveillance and if any emergency arises.

Andrew mentioned that he is exploring the possibility of providing tests here in MHD for symptomatic or potential contacts, using Cataldo Ambulance Services. (A later question asked about when this could happen, as test results from Quest can take 5-10 days.) This may be limited as the US CARES act that provide COVID funds is due to expire 12/20/20. He would have to develop guidelines as the HD “only has so much money.” In MHD, the CARES act has provided funds for overtime, a full-time public health nurse with overtime, full time inspector, additional custodial staff, etc.

Andrew that the signs with the mask requirements have been ordered and will be put out at numerous locations. He finally reminded all, especially businesses, that guidelines are frequently changing, so the website, [mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov), should be also viewed frequently.

## **REOPENING COMMITTEE**

The committee met on 11/9 and Dr. Bucky reported he had meet with the MA School Commissioner who wished full time classes. Dr. Bucky has decided to continues as is, i.e., hybrid, as it is going smoothly and the teachers are not ready. “Live streaming” is not an option as the school does not have the technology in place. The commissioner decided that cleaning all the surfaces at schools is less important than originally thought; air quality is much more important. This will allow the school to “cut back” on the additional custodial staffing. Dr. B reported that all parents have been notified about TG recommendations issued by the government. After the TG, MHD will return to the hybrid model, although some school districts have decided not to return to school afterwards.

Numerous questions from non-board participants included:

- 1) who is in charge of mask compliance? (Both the HD and police department are charged with the order, and are trying to educate the offender, and only if blatant, fining.)
- 2) series of questions, that are actually for the school committee and department: why continue 6 ft separation? How to address the safety of the special needs

teachers who can't social distance? How to address the needs of the teachers and students to know about positive cases in their classes when they have all had >15 minutes of contact with this student? (In this case, HIPPA rules prevent identification of the case to all, but if one is a close contact, they would get a call. If there is a cluster in a school, the state comes to test and evaluate.) why can't you know about COVID when you can know about lice in the class? Can you really remember who you have been with for 15 minutes?

3) can and how can a group put up the COVID signs? (No) How can one help in the community to make this all less fraught? (Contact town organizations, eg., Council on Aging)

The meeting was adjourned with the next meeting scheduled for 12/8/20 at 7:30 pm, and the following, 12/15/20 6:30 pm