



## OBSERVER REPORT

**BOARD OF HEALTH:** 12/15/20      League 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.

### COVID UPDATE:

Andrew reported on the most recent communication from Governor Baker regarding the distribution of the COVID vaccine and the guidance from the MA Department of Public Health for celebrating the holidays safely. Briefly, first doses of the vaccine arrived 12/14 with 4 hospitals getting 5,850 doses, and this is to be followed by 17 more hospitals who will get 53000 doses. MA is anticipated to get 180,000 of the Pfizer and 120,000 of the Moderna vaccine doses by the end of December. Doses are ordered by MA DPH and then shipped to hospitals or providers. As doses are administered, the hospitals will report to the DPH which will launch a public dashboard to track the immunizations given weekly. Questions about who and when individuals will be vaccinated can be sent to [COVID-19-Vaccine-Plan-MA@mass.gov](mailto:COVID-19-Vaccine-Plan-MA@mass.gov). CVS and Walgreens will be assisting in the vaccinations in nursing homes and skilled nursing facilities.

In addition, holiday activities guidance was given: limit in-person celebrations to household members, postpone or cancel holiday travel, follow state gathering size limits and sector specific workplace guidelines. High risk activities in particular are gatherings with others

outside your household especially if already diagnosed with COVID and not completing the isolation period, or has symptoms of COVID, or waiting for test results, etc.

All the safe behaviors (social distancing, wearing masks, frequent hand washing, not sharing food, etc.) have become even more paramount with recent large numbers of cases.

Andrew reminded the group that the vaccine administration will be in three phases with health workers, etc in phase one. Because of the time it will take to vaccinate at least 70% for the vaccine to be effective in curbing the epidemic, all need to be vigilant.

In MHD the case reporting continues with the addition of new graphs (thanks to the volunteer work of Kate Thomson). The report for the past week as of 12/11: the number of active cases = 73, tests taken 2,806, positive test rate 3.85%, cumulative cases 503, and confirmed deaths to date, 31. The distribution of cases by age are as follows: 15 (0-19), 21 (20-29), 7 (30-39), 15 (40-49), 21 (50-59), 17 (60-69), 9 (70-79) and 5 (>80). Of note, informal social gatherings without social distancing, etc. have been the main reason for these increases. The board member discussed the pros and cons of the new reporting format - some saying that there was perhaps too much information; difficulty correlating interventions with case counts (e.g. effect of increase signage); all agreed that the data is not to be used in a predictive manner; all did agree that presentation is helpful. Further discussion as about the possibility of MHD going from a "yellow" to a "red" community. This categorization depends of the case number per 100,000 and the test positive rate. At this point MHD is at the case number rate for the red classification but not the positivity rate (>5%).

Andrew reviewed how the MHD testing program that started on 12/11 went. 400 residents had signed up and cueing of cars started early along Atlantic Avenue into Temple Emmanuel. Due to staff shortages from Cataldo, the testing vendor, only 300 were able to be tested. (Cataldo reassured those not tested that they would make special arrangements to have them tested.) On 12/15, 384 were tested with additional staff. It is planned for 300 more on 12/18 and 700+ to be tested on 12/21 using the high school as the testing site. This will also allow the HD to out future vaccination plans. Andrew expressly wanted to thank Temple Emmanuel and Cataldo for all their efforts. Andrew also noted that there are multiple other testing

sites all over MA and to log onto [mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread](https://mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread) for details.

Andrew addressed that the reopening steps had “rolled back” to phase 3 step 1 with specific gathering limits (e.g. indoor venues capacity of 50%, now 40%) and that sector specific guidelines were tightened again (e.g. restaurants: 6 people not 10 at a table, 90 minute dining times, etc.) Each sector is expected to self-certify.

## REOPENING COMMITTEE

Helaine Hazlett, BOH member on this committee, reported that the committee met on 12/11 and 12/14. The topic for both meeting was how school would meet both before and after the holiday break. All students will be remotely learning 12/21-23 except for special needs children (if their parents wish) who can continue to attend school. Teachers have been offered additional PPE (gowns, gloves, facial shields, N95 masks). It is unclear as to how the students will meet after the break (remote, hybrid, etc.) and Dr. Bucky said that he would be working with the HD and BOH as to the number of cases in MHD. At this point is likely return would be remote, but if the case numbers improve, then back to hybrid.

## COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

1. Resident had gone for testing at Temple Emmanuel on 12/11 and waited 2 hours and was wondering about any glitches. Andrew said that on 12/11 there was a staff shortage, and today 12/15 there were none.
2. Resident was questioning about the teachers being offered N95 masks - this is from the School Department, and were being offered if teachers felt more comfortable wearing them as some of their students had mask exemptions.
3. What is the turnaround time for the tests done by Cataldo? Andrew answered that is 12-48 hours and tested would get a phone call or email. The tests are being processed by the Broad Institute (Cambridge, MA) and turnaround time can be slower based on volume. The results from Broad and uploaded to the MAVEN, the central database for COVID cases, results, etc. This is the source of information for the HD.

The meeting was adjourned with the next scheduled for 12/22/20 at 7:30pm via Zoom teleconferencing.