



Residential Education and Congregate Care HHS Surveillance Testing Guidance

September 17, 2020

Overview

- Staff in congregate care and residential education must have baseline testing and then surveillance testing (based on factors) and make a report to the state to get reimbursement
- Timeline is important
- Documentation is important
- Implications are important

Deadlines have been extended

Baseline Testing deadline has been extended

- Baseline testing should be completed by **September 30th**

Paperwork deadline has been extended

- Reporting of baseline testing should be completed by **October 2nd**

Consistent with the ongoing testing period, HHS expects completion of testing to be reported no later than the Friday following anyone testing period, including the baseline (online survey reporting).

Contract documents can be submitted any time between now and completion of the baseline testing. Reimbursements cannot be made until the contracting documents have been completed, submitted and signed.

Q: *Biweekly*: Is biweekly testing for High Regional Transmission Rate areas only? For example, if you are in a town designated red by the state but the region isn't "High Risk" you do not get a biweekly test?

A: This is correct. The testing guidance is based on the EMS regions, not the red/orange/yellow/green framework.

However, even settings in Low Transmission Regions are permitted to test staff up to (2) two times per month, and residents up to (1) one time per month

And the reimbursement can be sought/paid for this testing

Q: Do we do baseline and surveillance testing on those who have already have COVID-19?

- A: Based on 9/15 phone call with HHS and their read of their own guidance, no, do not re-test those who have already had COVID-19
- Schools that have done this are seeing continued positive tests for people who had COVID 5 and 6 months ago, and while we know they are not shedding the virus, the sensitive testing is still sometimes showing a positive (low value)
- Note: you do test symptomatic employees per general health rules

New Surveillance Testing Template Policy Available

- [Hirsch Roberts Weinstein, LLP](#) – maaps' employment lawyers have drafted a template surveillance Testing Policy for maaps
- This should be tailored to your individual schools needs
- Will be placed on the maaps Members only website

SAMPLE of the Policy

[EMPLOYER NAME]'s Surveillance Testing Policy

Introduction

- In accordance with guidance from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (“EOHHS”), [EMPLOYER NAME] (“School”) has implemented the following surveillance testing policy to monitor the spread of COVID-19 at the School and identify cases among staff who are asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic in an effort to keep our staff and residents safe. Testing will be conducted on all persons, paid or unpaid, working or volunteering at the School’s facility (“Staff”). Staff does not include persons who work entirely remotely or off-site, or employees who are on leave or otherwise not working at the School’s physical location during the relevant Testing Period or Baseline Period, as applicable. Except under circumstances described below, Staff who have previously tested positive for COVID-19 will not be subject to testing under this policy.

Thank you to JRC, who highlighted the typo here, HHS is correcting this and will provide us a new Appendix B

Appendix B

We will get a new Appendix B – if you are filling out paperwork before we get that, strike the highlighted sentence

Appendix B

Organization Attestation to COVID-19 Baseline Testing Policies

I, _____, hereby certify under the pains and penalties of perjury that I am the administrator or other duly authorized officer or representative of _____, located at _____, (hereinafter “organization”) and that the information provided in this attestation is a true and accurate representation of the COVID-19 testing procedure implemented and COVID-19 testing results at such organization.

Specifically, I represent and warrant that:

The organization completed the required testing for COVID-19 for the organization’s staff that worked during the relevant Testing Period beginning, _____, in accordance with all applicable requirements of **DPH’s Guidance for Long-Term Care Surveillance Testing**

The report accompanying this attestation and submitted to EOHHS via the online submissions portal to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of EOHHS Guidance for Congregate Care Surveillance Testing are complete and accurate.

Under the pains and penalties of perjury, I hereby certify that the above information is true and correct.

Printed Name: _____

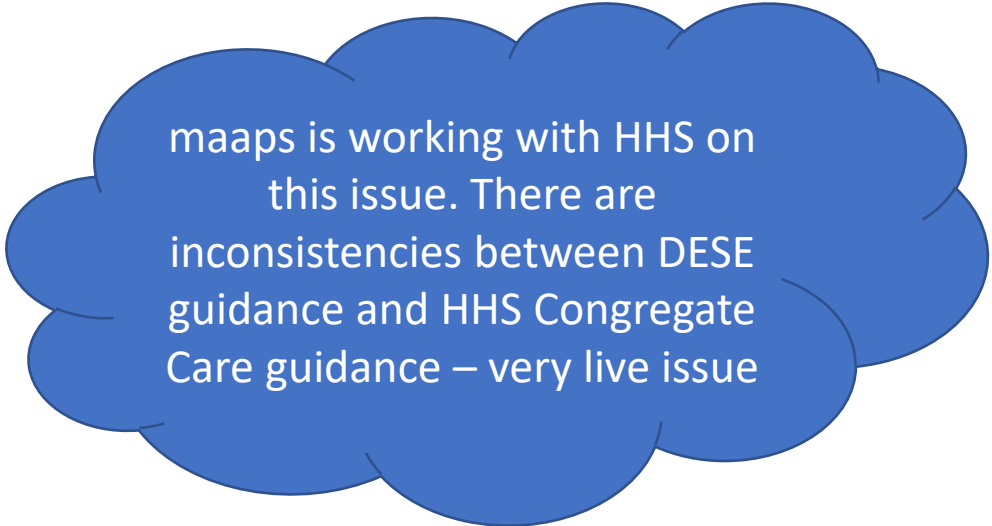
Close Contact and Quarantine

Issue: Conflicting Guidance:

Example: DESE Guidance (below):

- *When can a close contact return to school:*
- **Previous Guidance:** if they test negative/are asymptomatic and wearing PPE
- **Updated Guidance:** All close contacts should be tested but must self-quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to the person who tested positive, regardless of test results

- This change appears in the following 3 locations
- 8/14 HHS Surveillance Testing Guidance (p. 4)
- 8/7 DPH Guidance (p. 2)
- 8/19 DESE PowerPoint (p 3)



maaps is working with HHS on this issue. There are inconsistencies between DESE guidance and HHS Congregate Care guidance – very live issue

DESE Protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in school, on the bus, or in community settings

Initially released July 17, 2020 Revised September 14, 2020

“Close contacts of a positive COVID-19 case should be tested. For general guidance, DPH defines close contact as:

- Being within 6 feet of COVID-19 case (someone who has tested positive) for at least 10-15 minutes. Close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case while the case was symptomatic or within 2 days before symptom onset, OR
- Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on) **while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.”**

[https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#what-are-the-symptoms-of-covid-19?-](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#what-are-the-symptoms-of-covid-19?)

Surveillance Testing

- For the purposes of this guidance, “surveillance testing” is defined as **the routine testing of asymptomatic individuals** for the purposes of identifying individuals with asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic COVID-19 infections, in order to prevent viral transmission from these individuals.

Identification of Transmission Region

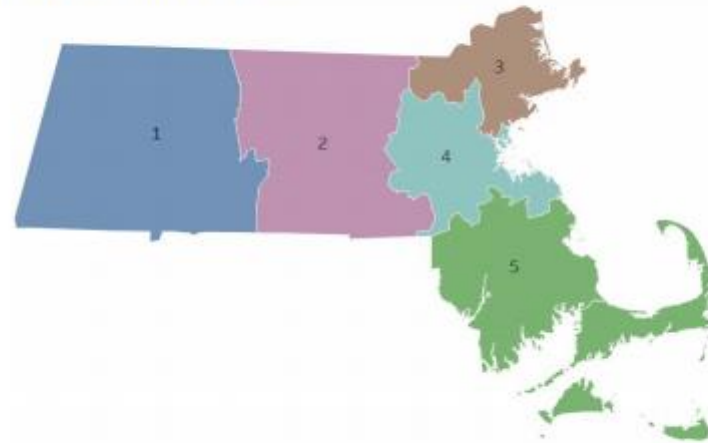
- EOHHS has established a regional transmission threshold which is used to determine the surveillance testing regimen that should be followed:
- For the purposes of this guidance, “**High-Transmission Region**” is defined as an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) region with a regional transmission rate equal to or greater than 40 cases per 100,000 residents as a 7 day rolling average.
- For the purposes of this guidance, “**Low-Transmission Region**” is defined as an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) region with a regional transmission rate below 40 cases per 100,000 residents as a 7 day rolling average.



Rate (per 100,000) of New Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in Past 7 Days by Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Region

7 Day Total of New Cases Through September 8, 2020

EMS Region	New Cases Per 100,000
1	15
2	21
3	41
4	31
5	23



Notes

(1) Massachusetts is divided into five geographical EMS regions. For more information, please see <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/ems-regions-in-massachusetts>.

(2) Cases per 100,000 for each EMS region are calculated as the number of new cases within a region divided by that region's population multiplied by 100,000.

September
16, 2020
DPH
Reporting
by EMS
Region

Reporting Positive COVID-19 cases

Q: What are all the agencies you are reporting to?

Examples of some that you might be reporting to – but we need to hear more from you:

Are you reporting to your Local Board of Health?

Are you reporting to DPH?

Are you reporting to EEC?

Are you reporting to DCF?

Are you reporting to DESE?

- DCF has reported inconsistent reporting – you may have received a communication from Katherine Canada (DCF) yesterday about non-DCF children being reported to DCF
- We want to work on this state reporting

9/17 Chat

- 09:48:26 From Larry Sauer : Is this powerpoint available for download
- 09:54:06 From Brianna Ivy Street : If I am not mistaken it starts after our baseline testing period
- 09:54:42 From Heather Morrison : Good catch. I didn't even notice that
- 09:56:22 From Pam Raymond : Good question to follow up on - the guidance is based on data that's not provided.
- 09:58:29 From Ashley Constantine : EEC is asking us to report positive student cases, quarantined students and isolated students every week
- 09:58:32 From helena maguire : I agree that the reporting of positive cases to various agencies is a problem in the communication channels-whether it be staff or kids. We need to have this streamlined.
- 09:58:33 From Larry Sauer : DEEC is requesting weekly reporting.
- 09:58:55 From Heather Morrison : agree with Helena!
- 09:59:34 From judy hurlburt : DCF was also asking for positive staff working with DCF students
- 10:00:13 From Ashley Constantine : I am not
- 10:00:20 From Larry Sauer : no
- 10:00:34 From Amy Purkis : i reported positive staff to dcf as well
- 10:00:57 From judy hurlburt : I can send you spread sheet they asked us to complete
- 10:00:59 From ejanas : DCF has a template that must be completed for positive cases (no names of staff or children)
- 10:01:06 From Ashley Constantine : Yes staff to DCF as well
- 10:01:13 From Susan Keays : I also call epidemiology line
- 10:01:30 From MMacdonald : Implications for notifying guardians of the Agencies receiving this info on their kids?
- 10:02:06 From Amy Purkis : I think a reporting cheat sheet would be very helpful
- 10:02:07 From Bridget Anderson : DCF just started asking for a meeting for any positive case to review the questions
- 10:02:46 From Monica Kleeman : Will the powerpoint be made available?
- 10:03:12 From Mark de Chabert : Yes, on the website and also via communication.
- 10:04:40 From Heather Morrison : Thanks Elizabeth. I have to run to another meeting.
- 10:04:41 From Bridget Anderson : correct
- 10:04:53 From judy hurlburt : no names
- 10:05:21 From Bridget Anderson : very helpful, thank you!!!