

**COVID-19 Teleconference with LA County Public Health
7/8/2020, 3PM**



SPEAKERS

- Barbara Ferrer, PHD, MPH, MEd, Director, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
- Robert Gilchick, MD, MPH, Child and Adolescent Health Section Chief, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
- Dawn Terashita, MD, Associate Director, Acute Communicable Disease Control Program

BIG NEWS: HIGHER ED GUIDANCE COMING

- LA County Public Health is preparing to release protocol for higher education in next few days, perhaps end of this week or early next week.
- They received feedback from campuses and incorporated it
- This guidance is released ahead of the state and may need to be adjusted once the state releases guidance.
- Reopening is determined by data. If conditions worsen, things may change.
- There is a private call center for LA County Public Health at 877-777-5799 for communication and guidance.

MAJOR CONCERNS

- There is a lot of community transmission. They reached their highest level of daily hospitalizations, topping 2000.
- Positivity rate is 11%. At the beginning of the pandemic when testing was limited to only the most likely cases, it was 15%. It was just 5% before. Reflects there is a lot of community transmission. 1900 average hospital daily was 1400 before.
- We have to be extraordinarily careful now. What we do today has extraordinary impact to data in 3 weeks.

PHASE 3

- We are currently in Phase 3. Higher education has not received guidance on reopening like other businesses, but we are in Phase 3 at the state and county levels.

HIGHER ED GUIDANCE

Reminder: LACPH awaiting guidance from State. This protocol may change to align with state once that guidance is released. Highlighted importance to maintain plans for distance learning. If you bring people together, you will have cases.

- **PHYSICAL DISTANCING:** Physical distancing very important for faculty, staff, office settings, as well as classroom setting. 6 foot distance is extremely important.
- **LIMIT SIZE OF GATHERINGS.** Just because you can fit 100 with physical distancing in a large lecture hall, does not mean you should. Keep numbers small. Think more like a maximum of 30. The number is provided as an idea, not a scientific number.
- **OUTDOOR** settings are safer. Air circulation is important.
- **FACE COVERINGS** are required by state, especially when you can't maintain the 6 foot distance.
 - **FACULTY:** Option for faculty who are lecturing for long periods can use a face shield instead of face covering. BUT the face shield should have a fabric drape at tucks in at the bottom to have a better seal to capture droplets.
- **MEDICAL CONDITIONS:** For those who have medical conditions and cannot wear face covering, the best option is to consider distance learning options.
- **INFECTION CONTROL METHODS:** Improve infection control methods. Frequently clean and disinfect restrooms, railings, door handles.
- **RESIDENCE HALLS:**

- Plan for space on or off campus for those in isolation or quarantine.
- Eliminate shared bathroom use as much as possible.
- SPORTS/ATHLETICS
 - Professional sports teams have authorization to resume with no spectators
 - Sports centers can open with restrictions.
 - No close contact.
 - Individual conditioning, drills, skill building under a trainer or coach is OK.
 - Cannot have team or group practice, activity or scrimmage.
 - Best to not share equipment. If not, thorough disinfection is important.
 - Even professional leagues with money for bubbles and so forth already cannot avoid cases

MANAGEMENT OF CASES

- PROCESS. Public health does patient investigation and contact tracing. Every confirmed case is contacted and interviewed. The role of the college/university is to assist with quick identification of symptomatic or confirmed cases and potential exposed contacts. Higher education groups are instrumental to link cases together and contain and limit transmissions. Public Health wants to know if we have a positive case.
- OUTBREAKS. An outbreak is when there are 3 or more cases that are linked together. Public health determines and assigns official to investigate and work with the college to make the right steps. Before an outbreak, public health is not as active in working with the campus, but there to assist and guide.
- CASES. Every time we have a case, we advised to contact them. They can guide us through what to do with isolation, quickly identify close contacts, potentially exposed individuals, how to communicate with others on campus.
- TESTING. College should have the ability to have symptomatic people and close contacts be tested rapidly. The institution does not need to do the testing, but have a plan for students to access COVID testing. You could refer people to community resources. HOWEVER, do not count on community mobile testing sites to be around forever. They were only meant for short term build up for testing capacity. Find a lab and make an arrangement so you are ready to go when you have your first positive case.

Q&A: SKILLS LABS. When will there be guidance?

- Training for essential infrastructure workers is allowed. Use state guidance.
 - Physical distance. If 6 feet is not possible, use dividers and partitions.
 - Use face coverings
 - No big gatherings
 - Strict infection control. Disinfect surfaces, equipment before it is shared with anyone else
 - Good handwashing and hygiene
 - If you are doing health care worker training, then look at the guidance for health care workers as well. If you do stuff for labs, look at manufacturing guidance.

Q&A: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS. For international students, is it appropriate to offer in person and online classes?

- Seek legal counsel.
- Harvard and MIT are suing federal guidelines

Q&A: PHASE 3 - Do we have to wait until Phase 3 to open?

- We are in stage 3. The state issues guidance that then allows the counties to move forward with reopening sectors that may be closed. We have not gotten guidance on reopening colleges and universities. We never officially closed you. We are providing protocol to help you plan in advance of state direction.

Q&A: DINING – For campus dining, do you follow dining guidance?

- No indoor dining allowed right now.
- If do dining services now, adhere to restaurant guidance.

Q&A: PERFORMING ARTS – Can they bring dance programs back?

- Dance is not a possibility right now, but it could be in the fall. Depends on distancing. No performances allowed, probably can't get there in the fall. Skill building allowed now. Conditioning is allowed now. Gym classes are allowed with distancing. There are requirements for testing for high risk activity.
- Provided the private call center for guidance. They are happy to consult for planning purposes. Planning is good, but they are not in the business of approving plans. It is overwhelming. Provide protocol and institutions will implement with more details and planning.

Q&A: EMPLOYEES – Can they bring employees back?

- All essential functions have always been OK, like maintenance, security, and payroll. You're allowed to be open for the purposes of making sure you're getting the campuses ready for additional activities and actions at a later date.
- If you bring employees back, then follow protocols for office work.
- Strong recommendation wherever possible, keep people teleworking if it is possible. There is tons of spread at the moment. Pay attention to workers who are elderly or have serious underlying health conditions. They are at greater risk right now.

Q&A: COLLEGIATE SPORTS

- Clarified equipment can be shared if thoroughly disinfected.
- Recreational pools are open. There are guidelines and protocol. No team training or activities. Individuals are allowed to swim laps, condition. Protocol for pool use is available.

Q&A: TESTING BACKLOG?

- Last week there was a backlog to get test results. Delay in part due to increased testing nationally, and short of reagents. Constantly still short in the supply chain.
- At minimum, colleges need a relationship with a lab now. Make sure you have an MOU, a lab knows who you are. We are all at the mercy of labs that have struggled. Choose carefully, there are labs that don't report to them, don't have reagents, and have delays. Hope to have a good supply chain again soon. Need to have a relationship with a lab or provider because you can't rely on the community site.

RECORDING

Replay the teleconference by calling (866) 207-1041. Access Code: 5085509. Available for one week.