COVID-19 School Update

DATE: 3/11/2020
MINUTES PREPARED BY: TRACY SCHULTZ
LOCATION: CONFERENCE CALL, SLIDES AND HANDOUTS WILL BE PROVIDED

Presenters:
- Susan Klammer, MDH Epidemiologist
- Kathy Como-Sabetti, MDH Epidemiologist
- Erika Yoney, MDH School Health Consultant
- Wendy Hatch, Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)

Agenda
- Situational Awareness Update
- Key Messages
- MDE Updates
- FAQs Overview

Meeting notes
1. Welcome and purpose of the call
2. Kathy Como-Sabetti, Presenter: Situation Update
   - Globally there are 120,000+ COVID-19 cases
   - In the U.S. there are over 1,000 cases with 29 deaths making the case fatality rate of 3%.
   - This is consistent with what has been seen globally.
   - Many U.S. cases are coastal: Washington (state), California, New York and Massachusetts.
   - Some states are reporting community transmission with no direct connection to a traveler.
   - This means they are moving from a process of containment to mitigation
     - Containment = process of keeping something under control
     - Mitigation = action of reducing the severity of spread
   - There are 5 identified cases in Minnesota.
   - Minnesota is still in the “containment phase” and continues to try to trace likely exposures.
There will come a point when we are unable to trace exposure contact (community spread) and will move into the “mitigation phase,” but will continue contact investigations until they are no longer deemed useful.

The goal is to spread out new cases over time allowing the healthcare system to deal with presenting cases without putting strain on the systems.

The MDH lab has tested nearly 300 patients so far and have increased our testing capacity.

More cases will be identified.

3. Erika Yoney, Presenter: Key Messages

The following recurring questions were addressed:

- **Does having an identified case in MN change any recommendations for schools?** No, at this point we are not looking at making any changes to the current recommendations.

- **At what point do we close schools?** At this point, we are not recommending school closures. This complex topic will have both educational and social implications. We will be in close communication with you should that change. See Washington Post article that talks about the pros and cons included in slides.

- **What about students with underlying health conditions or those that are medically fragile?** We are working with MDE on guidance and we encourage families to contact their medical provider to discuss a child’s specific needs. Also, for those with 504s and IEPs, review how you can continue to provide support limiting disruption to their educational access. Consider alternate locations for provision of health services. Please refer to the letter and lists related to cleaning supplies and FAQs.


- Continue to update and share your pandemic plans

- Look at strengthening your attendance monitoring

  - Who is sick, how many are sick, are you monitoring symptoms when families call in, are you seeing influenza like illness (ILI) that requires reporting?

- Create or meet as an emergency planning team

- Make sure your information is up to date on the MDE website (links in slides)

4. Wendy Hatch, Presenter: MDE Updates
– General guidance around distance learning, should a student need to self-quarantine and stay at home, will be forthcoming. It will include the ability to:
  • Receive interaction from teacher or teachers
  • Receive appropriate educational materials
  • Still count as present and not absent on an attendance list
– Guidance on how to approach school closures and provision of services is also forthcoming

Q&A Session

1. **Spring break and general travel questions?** Follow the current CDC recommendations and check frequently for changes and updates. There are currently no domestic travel restrictions. It will be a district decision in collaboration with families, students and school boards whether to cancel a planned trip.

2. **Should we be canceling large events?** We are not making that recommendation at this time. This may change if we enter mitigation. If it is an essential event far in advance, you may want to think about preparing contingency plans.

3. **What about shortage of substitutes for staff and nurses?** The nursing shortage can lead to a sub issue within any district. Add this issue to your emergency plan and begin thinking about who the staff would be and begin training them now.


5. **How do I connect with local public health (LPH) emergency preparedness contact?** See link to list of county LPH in slides.

6. **What is a fever?** Use Hennepin County Infectious Diseases Manual guidance for illness as to when a student should stay home in slides.

7. **What if a student or staff person meets the criteria for self-isolation, but they are still coming to school?** Please contact MDH for support in communicating with the family.

8. **What happens with a case and how are people identified?**
  • Commercial labs are testing and prioritizing the west coast and the MDH Public Health Lab is testing locally.
  • As people communicate with their provider, their provider will make the decision whether to test or not.
  • Patients should stay home until results are known.
  • Negative results are sent back to the provider to share with patients.
• If there is a positive result there is coordination between the provider and MDH and the patient is interviewed by MDH to find out when did symptoms began, and who they had contact with.
• If there was a risk of school exposure, the school will be notified.
• Asymptomatic contact will not require notification to the school.
• If the patient is symptomatic the school will be notified on a case by case basis
  ▪ High risk – household, ongoing, close contact
  ▪ Medium – around case, close, prolonged period
  ▪ Low – large space or classroom space for shorter period

9. Low risk – monitor for 14 days and stay home when sick (general population)
10. Medium risk – stay home and only leave for essentials – not infectious, but stay home in case symptoms develop and they could infect others
11. High risk – stay home without leaving – even for essentials

We are here to support you with communication to your staff and families. Please reach out to MDH, MDE or LPH before sending out mass communications.
Families and students can access the MDH public COVID-19 Hotline: 651-201-3920.

For more information, please contact:
Email: health.schools.covid19@state.mn.us
Phone: 651-201-5414

Next meeting
Date: Friday, March 13, 2020
Time: 8:00 a.m. CST
Location: Audio-only Conference Call
Call-in number: (877) 219-9848
Conference ID: 8519719