Reopening Summary 7/29/2020

What are some of the concerns that schools will have to address before reopening?
Answered by Sam Wong, Health Director, City of Framingham

The Board of Health is recommending the schools to take necessary time to look at staffing, transportation, and space considerations before bringing in students. If students are brought back too soon there may be issues with an increase spread of the virus. Mr. Wong is confident that the school system will do the best that they can, but more time is needed to evaluate and implement state guidance appropriately. Another concern is how to accommodate students that need extra help and assistance and how to get resources to those groups. There are going to have public health costs associated with all options on the table. The City is working with non-profits to provide food resources to those families in need and will continue to provide those to families through the summer and fall. The MetroWest YMCA is going to take over the emergency food delivery program in August to those families who are at the greatest risk and cannot get access to food.

Also, the City is exploring with non-profits to create small schoolhouse settings with volunteers during the day to support those with challenging remote learning environments. Some families cannot provide adequate space for remote learning and the City is exploring small spaces to accommodate 5 to 10 students with volunteers to help with that challenge. Those groups would stay the same (cohorting) to reduce the risk. Mr. Wong also stated that outdoor spaces were being researched as well.

What is the risk to the staff at a restaurant when they are serving people at a table not wearing masks?
Answered by Sam Wong, Health Director, City of Framingham

It is critical for staff to wear a mask at all times and limit their time at each table to reduce the risk. It is true that those sitting at restaurant tables do not need to wear a mask while eating or drinking, but do so when they are moving around. There will always be risks, however, wearing a mask helps reduce the spread and risk to servers. Also, maintaining spacing between tables to at least 6 feet apart at restaurants is important.

Is outdoor dining safer than indoor dining?
Answered by Sam Wong, Health Director, City of Framingham

Outdoor dining is safer than indoor dining. More space for movement of air and less confined spaces reduces the spread of the virus.

What should be done with surfaces to keep people safe?
Answered by Sam Wong, Health Director, City of Framingham
Always wash your hands and keep surfaces clean. Studies have shown that spread from surfaces is less than from person-to-person contact. Continuing to clean surfaces will always be advised.

**Are gloves a useful tool to reduce the spread?**

Answered by Sam Wong, Health Director, City of Framingham

Gloves may not be necessary to prevent the spread. The virus will not be transmitted through the skin. Cleaning surfaces and washing hands is a much more effective way to reduce the spread of the virus.

**What trends does the City see from people needing assistance?**

Answered by Kevin Shea, Director of Development, City of Framingham

Applications for people looking for emergency housing relief, specifically rent and utilities resources have increased. The City will receive more Cares Act funding over the next few weeks to help fund these programs. Small businesses are not operating at full capacity and may not be bringing back 100% of their staff. Those that are working may not be bringing in 100% of their pay so assistance is needed to help pay bills. Childcare costs and concerns are increasing. Parents are looking at trying to balance work and childcare. There is no current assistance for parents in this scenario. There have been discussions on the state level for possible assistance with childcare.

**A question regarding hotel gatherings:**

On the subject of advocacy: we would like to have more flexibility to utilize our meeting space and would like to push for the safest and largest numbers possible?

Answered by Sam Wong, Health Director, City of Framingham

The limitation on the size of gathering at an indoor event is set by the Governor’s Office, not locally. Advocacy can be done directly to EOHED, who developed the guidance: [https://www.mass.gov/info-details/safety-standards-and-checklist-indoor-and-outdoor-events](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/safety-standards-and-checklist-indoor-and-outdoor-events)

**How can hotels market what they have and get information out to the public?**

Answered by Sam Wong, Health Director, City of Framingham

Mr. Wong recommended that hotels clearly state their cleaning policies and follow the guidelines. Consumers are worried about room cleaning. Ensuring that the rooms are sanitized between each occupancy may be helpful. Guidance on events from the Baker Administration is restrictive but not impossible. Rules of other organizations (houses of worship) are different than hotels, but there are no updates right now. The Governor has been cautious with reopening phases with respect to other areas of the country with spiking cases.
I have an 800 square foot mosaic art studio in Holliston. I have made the following precautions. Have I missed anything?

- Forehead thermometer – temp taken when you first come to the door
- Lots of hand sanitizer everywhere
- Dividers between people
- Plastic sheeting down the middle of the table
- 5-person class maximum.
- Gloves and masks need to be worn throughout class
- Two air purifiers at opposite sides of the room
- I’ll be giving people materials, limited walking around (I’ll have floor arrows for limited walking only if needed)
- A/C with windows open!
- All containers, work area and chair that is used, need to be wiped down with disinfectant by the student after use.
- All tools will be put in a bin for cleaning after use
- The bathroom is cleaned regularly professionally, and there is Clorox in there to wipe down all the surfaces people touch

Mr. Wong responded and copied Scott Moles, Public Health Director in Holliston.

The requirement is 8/1000 sq ft.

- Seating chart of each session. This will be helpful for contact tracing if one of the participants becomes infected.
- Require a self-check screening questionnaire for all of your staff and students upon arrival to the studio (preferably prior to going inside the studio, actually)

The screening questionnaire should include the following:

- Worker/client is not experiencing any symptoms such as fever (100.0 and above) or chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, fatigue, headache, muscle/body aches, runny nose/congestion, new loss of taste or smell, or nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
Worker/client has not had “close contact” with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19. “Close contact” means living in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, caring for a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more, or coming in direct contact with secretions (e.g., sharing utensils, being coughed on) from a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, while that person was symptomatic.

Worker/client has not been asked to self-isolate or quarantine by their doctor or a local public health official.

Mr. Shea mentioned that other municipalities may have programs to assist residence with housing relief as well as small business resources.

Mr. Wong added that new case count in Framingham is relatively low with a slight increase in cases over the last few days. Testing results are slow and could take up to a week. This puts the city in a difficult position to do contact tracing. He also commented that people should continue to wash their hands, wear masks, and practice social distancing to try and slow the spread. State and local officials are monitoring cases locally and nationally to see if guidance needs to be updated.