COVID 19: Handling Employee Exposures and Planning for Mass Vaccination

What a Business Needs to Safely Open
Legal Disclosure:

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Ask us questions – give us feedback – this hour is for you

• Please use the chat function to ask your questions at anytime.
Latest COVID 19 Numbers
COVID-19 cases across Maine
The numbers behind the COVID-19 spread...

**Age groups’ contribution to COVID-19 transmission in the U.S.**

Estimated as of August 17, 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Estimated transmission</th>
<th>Pct. of population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-34</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-49</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-79</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>All Deaths involving COVID-19 (US7.1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All ages</td>
<td>359,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Under 1 year</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-4 years</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-14 years</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15-24 years</td>
<td>537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25-34 years</td>
<td>2,335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35-44 years</td>
<td>6,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45-54 years</td>
<td>16,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55-64 years</td>
<td>42,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65-74 years</td>
<td>76,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75-84 years</td>
<td>99,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85 years and over</td>
<td>115,643</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data: Monod, et al. 2021; “Age groups that sustain resurgent COVID-19 epidemics in the United States”; Chart: Axios Visuals
Maine:

- 12.03 doses given per 100 people
- 8.9% of population got at least one shot
- 3.1% are fully vaccinated
Update on Vaccine rollout across Maine and Northern Light Health
Vaccinating Maine

Currently Immunizing:
- Healthcare Personnel
- Long-Term Care
- COVID-19 Response Personnel
- Mainers over 70 years old

Community Involvement!
- University of Maine
- Beale School of Nursing
- EMCC School of Nursing
- Husson School of Pharmacy

### Maine: COVID-19 Vaccination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Doses Distributed</th>
<th>Doses Given</th>
<th>First Dose</th>
<th>Final Dose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>212,125</td>
<td>140,353</td>
<td>8.56%</td>
<td>2.89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Eastern Maine Medical Center
Weekly Vaccines Administered

- Week 1: 68%
- Week 2: 12%
- Week 3: 40%
Next Phase:

- Adults 65-69 years old
- Adults with high-risk medical conditions
  - Obesity
  - Heart Disease
  - Cancer
  - And many more
Planning mass vaccination of employees

Start Planning Now!

- How will you identify eligible employees/vaccinated employees
- What workplace vaccination expectations will you set
- How will you manage vaccine timing and post-vaccine absenteeism

Can you determine employee eligibility?

- May need to consider privacy laws, EOE rules, etc.
- # of employees eligible for each phase, departments they work in

Can you determine employee willingness to get vaccine?

- Conversations, surveys

Have a plan for managing absenteeism post-vaccination

- Stagger vaccination within departments
- Encourage vaccination at end of day, or prior to days off
- Have a written process for managing/responding to side effects (When should an employee stay home/test v.s. work)
- Have a written policy around PTO, sick time use for vaccine absenteeism
Poll Question One:
What actions, if any, has your business had to take as a result of a positive COVID-19 employee?
How to plan for an exposure: Scenario one
Mary, a teller at Blueberry Credit Union, goes to work on Monday.
She doesn’t think much about how she didn’t smell her cinnamon apple oatmeal at breakfast.

It is a particularly busy Monday. She helps at least 30 customers. She enjoys seeing them and her dozen colleagues throughout the day.

Tuesday, she wakes up exhausted, achy, and burning up. She calls work, and they refer her to be COVID tested. By days end, it’s positive: Mary has COVID-19.

Mary immediately calls her supervisor and shares the news. She passes along that a few of her family members she had seen the week before have also tested positive.
What steps do we need to take?
Now what... Next steps

• Take your own pulse first!
• Science is evolving faster than Mary’s oatmeal solidified!
• Much of the response that will follow is a human relations event and may require more work than the actual exposures do
• This disease is primarily spread through small droplets in the air
• So consider:
  1. Layout of facility and spacing/ barriers
  2. Personal protective equipment in use in BOTH customer and office areas
  3. Efficiency of air exchanges
  4. Recent infections of other staff to inform who should or should not be tested
  5. And at long last!!!! Vaccination history/ planning for employees
Steps: (when three or more positive employees)

1. Have a clear conversation with employees (many or most with disease will never have symptoms)
2. Identify employees with closest protected and ANY unprotected exposure with coworkers (break rooms, dinners, parties)
3. Consider the setting (bank) and that if PPE is worn, it can be considered appropriate.
   - Many employers test everyone - remove any symptomatic employees from work immediately
   - Transition to remote customer service immediately
   - Concentrate on assessing ANY exposures without proper PPE and those with closest physical contact
   - Test the employees - every few days for 3 tests - especially those in the higher risk category
   - Consider HR policy support for absences

Resources exist to help:

How do we help employees with a workplace exposure...
Helping Employees Cope with a Workplace Exposure

• **Be respectful:** recognize this is a very unsettling, stressful experience
• **Be transparent:** communicate how, when and why decisions are made
• **Educate:** Help employees recognize signs of mental health distress
• **Prepare supervisors** to lead by example
• **Align your policies** to reflect how you value your workforce

Common symptoms of anxiety and stress:

• Feeling physically and mentally drained
• Having difficulty making decisions, focusing
• Becoming easily frustrated
• Arguing more often with friends and family
• Felling tired, sad, numb, lonely, or worried
• Experiencing changes in appetite or sleep patterns
• Overreacting to normal stimuli like noise and lighting
Helping Employees Prioritize Self-Care and Wellness

Approach and assist:

How are you coping with the potential workplace exposure?

In what ways can I best support you?

Listen:

Take time to actively listen and communicate with employees in an open and non-judgmental way.

Give support and information:

Reassure employees that you are there to support and help them.

Encourage appropriate professional help:

Suggest employees speak to someone with professional expertise about their experience if needed.

• Encourage use of personal time as needed
• Encourage exercise and wellness breaks
• Create a safe, quiet break space where employees can step away
Return to Work (RTW)

- Communicate openly with employees and customers
- Follow Maine CDC Guidelines for RTW
- Review criteria for employees with a positive result to be cleared to RTW
- Address issues of employees who don’t feel well enough to RTW
- Don’t retest – not a useful strategy to manage RTW
- Maintain a safe business environment
Poll question 2
Has your business started planning for COVID-19 employee vaccination?
Planning your employees for vaccines: Scenario two
Scenario #2: Lobster claw insurance company just got word from Maine CDC that their employees are eligible for vaccines. They have four locations with 400 employees across the state. What do they do to get their employees vaccinated while continuing to run a business?
Mass vaccinations take coordination – how do we get ahead of anxiety from taking over your culture
Vaccine Planning

Reasons for hesitancy:
1. Rushed vaccine timeline
2. Want to wait to confirm it is safe
3. Lack of trust in vaccines
4. Want to see how effective it is

= Lost work time, employee exposures, increased healthcare costs, lost income
Vaccine Anxiety Is Real

Perceptyx Research & Insights Report
Key Findings:

• 60 percent of respondents are fearful of the potential side effects of the vaccine, however over 67 percent believe the research and development of the vaccine is trustworthy.

• Just over half (52%) say they would get the vaccine so they wouldn’t have to wear a mask at work, however the CDC still recommends mask wearing even after the two doses of the vaccine.

Helping Employees Cope with Vaccine Anxiety

- Validate concerns
- Offer information
- Encourage employees to do their research
- Highlight the benefits compared to the risks
- Connect to the larger purpose

The CDC’s COVID-19 Vaccines page is a great resource to share with employees.

Research shows that employees who are most likely to follow through on their organization’s recommendation to get vaccinated are those who have stronger relationships with their managers, who believe their symptoms would be severe if they contracted COVID-19 and those who have already been tested for COVID-19.
Vaccine Planning

Whats Your Plan?
- How will you identify eligible employees/vaccinated employees
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Useful Links:
- CDC Communication Toolkits:

Education
- Identify Resources
  - Local Health Systems and Public Health
  - Health Plan
  - Federal and Maine CDC (Links)

Engage and Support
- Conversations, Surveys
- Identify and Acknowledge Concerns, Respond
- HR Policies, Clear Expectations

Communication
- Keep staff up to date
- Incorporate into regular communications
How do we help employees, make a decision?
Choosing whether or not to get vaccinated is a personal decision and we encourage everyone to talk with their doctor. We do know.....

• All COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States have been shown to be highly effective at preventing COVID-19.

• Getting vaccinated yourself may also protect people around you, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

• COVID-19 vaccination is an important tool to help stop the pandemic.

Source: www.cdc.gov
Tools you can use:

https://northernlighthealth.org/Resources/Safe-Return-to-Business
For more information or to submit a topic for a future Zoom Conference:

Contact:
Lanie Abbott
Director of Communications
lwabbott@northernlight.org
Join us Thursday, February 18: Reducing risk, increasing focus, and taking care of business

Topics:

• Latest on COVID-19 and vaccine update
• Strategies for reducing risk of exposures in the workplace
• Prioritizing mental health during a pandemic
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