

# THIS IS AN OFFICIAL NH DHHS HEALTH ALERT

Distributed by the NH Health Alert Network  
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## Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Outbreak, Update # 25 *Masks, Travel Guidance, and Contact Tracing Updates*

### Key Points and Recommendations:

- CDC has released a [Scientific Brief](#) about the effectiveness of community use of face masks to control spread COVID-19. NH Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) continues to recommend everybody (except for people with contraindications per [CDC guidance](#)) wear face masks when in any public location.

### Travel & Quarantine Guidance:

- DPHS continues to recommend against any non-essential personal or business travel, and people should avoid gathering with others who are not part of a person's immediate household, even during the holidays.
- NH DPHS has released two updated COVID-19 travel and quarantine guidance documents:
  1. [General Travel and Quarantine Guidance](#)
  2. [Employer Travel, Screening, and Exclusion Guidance](#)
- People traveling outside the six New England States (NH, ME, VT, MA, CT, RI) still need to self-quarantine for 14 days from their last day of travel outside New England (unchanged).
- Travelers now have the option to shorten their travel-related quarantine if all the following apply: the person gets a molecular-based test (an antigen is not acceptable) on day 7 (or later) of their quarantine, the person tests negative, and they remain asymptomatic.
  - This 7-day "test out" of travel quarantine option applies ONLY to travel-related quarantine and NOT quarantine due to other types of exposure.
- Exemptions to travel quarantine are still allowed if a person's travel is "essential travel" or if the person is an essential critical infrastructure employee.
  - For an essential employee exemption, the person can only return to work under the listed set of restrictions in the NH DPHS [guidance](#), but they must adhere to other aspects of the travel quarantine guidance.

### Contact Tracing Updates:

- Due to the rapid pandemic surge and [widespread community transmission](#), containment is no longer possible; it will take strict adherence to the community mitigation interventions (i.e., avoiding social gatherings, physical distancing, cloth face mask use, etc.) to reduce community transmission.
- NH DPHS will no longer investigate each person diagnosed with COVID-19 and instead will prioritize contact tracing for those who have an increased potential to transmit infection in congregate settings or those who are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. DPHS will investigate the following persons or situations:
  - People 18 years of age and younger

- People 65 years of age and older
- Racial and ethnic minorities that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19
- Any person associated with congregate settings (e.g., long-term care facilities, schools, etc.) or healthcare facilities
- Any clusters or outbreaks
- Healthcare providers should provide any patient diagnosed with COVID-19 with the NH DPHS [Isolation Guide](#), and instruct their patient to:
  1. Isolate (stay home) for at least 10 days from start of their symptoms (or 10 days from the positive test date if they are and remain asymptomatic).
  2. Notify their close contacts (including immediate household and other non-household contacts) of potential exposure and provide them with the NH DPHS [Quarantine Guide](#).
- “Close contact” is defined as a person being within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 for a cumulative time of 10 minutes or longer during the person’s infectious period; this exposure can occur over multiple separate contacts or even days.
- Close contacts of people diagnosed with COVID-19:
  1. Must quarantine (stay home) for 14 days from the last day of their exposure to the person infectious with COVID-19.
  2. Get tested for COVID-19 (ideally 5-7 days after exposure) even if they do not have symptoms of COVID-19. Testing for COVID-19 during quarantine helps identify infection early when someone may be infected but still asymptomatic and can help stop further spread of the virus, but a negative test does NOT allow a person to end quarantine early.

### **Communication and Partner Engagement:**

- Webinar for **long-term care facilities (LTCFs)** and **congregate living settings** every **Wednesday** from **11:45 – 1:00 pm**:
  - Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/511075725>
  - Call-in phone number: (929) 205-6099
  - Meeting ID: 511 075 725
  - Password: 092020
- Webinar for **school partners** every **Wednesday** from **3:30 – 4:30 pm**:
  - Zoom link: <https://nh-dhhs.zoom.us/j/98062195081>
  - Call-in phone number: (646) 558-8656
  - Meeting ID: 980 6219 5081
  - Password: 197445
- Webinar for **healthcare providers** and **local partners** every **Thursday** from **12:00 – 1:00 pm**:
  - Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/s/94841259025>
  - Call-in phone number: (646) 558-8656
  - Meeting ID: 948 4125 9025
  - Password: 003270

- For any questions regarding this notification, please call the NH DHHS, DPHS, Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at (603) 271-4496 during business hours (8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.).
- If you are calling after hours or on the weekend, please call the New Hampshire Hospital switchboard at (603) 271-5300 and request the Public Health Professional on-call.
- To change your contact information in the NH Health Alert Network, please send an email to [DHHS.Health.Alert@dhhs.nh.gov](mailto:DHHS.Health.Alert@dhhs.nh.gov).

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From: Benjamin P. Chan, MD, MPH, State Epidemiologist  
Originating Agency: NH Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services

**Attachments:** None