

## CRTF HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE (HSC) AUG 18<sup>TH</sup> MEETING NOTES

Participating: Ann Birner, Kathie Lynch, James Petersen, Stephanie Seacord, Kristin Shaw, Toni McLellan

1. Ventilation – James reviewed key information and answered questions.

- The intent of buildings is to create compartments separate from the outdoors. Air exchange is many orders higher in the outdoors (tens of thousands of CFMs vs hundreds indoors), and this enormous difference is reflected in suggestions for pandemic behavior such as moving activities outdoors, improving ventilation indoors (recognizing that relative benefit falls far short of being outdoors), etc. Ventilation improvements might approximately double indoor air exchange at best.
- MERV-13 filters (recently installed as upgrades in Portsmouth schools) capture smaller particles than MERV-8 and can be a retrofit; improvements are difficult to quantify. Only HEPA filters reliably trap viruses but are impractical for general use and not amenable to retrofitting because they are much larger. Processes that aggregate particles (e.g. ionization, considered by code-setters as an “emerging” technology) may enhance filtration.
- Ultraviolet light effectiveness in killing viruses depends on adequate exposure.
- Standards exist for health care facilities and for other types of buildings, but they are difficult to compare or contrast as the units vary (ACH/air change per hour vs CFM/cubic feet per minute). James created and walked the subcommittee through recommendations for private dwellings, bars/restaurants, and classrooms that he had adjusted for easier comparison.
- **Kristin** referenced documents from an industrial hygienist at UNH on the topic of risk reduction engineering; she will share with members via email. Increasing air exchange/dilution to reduce viral transmission, in the setting of food and beverage service, may introduce contaminants if not done carefully.

2. Public Information – Stephanie reported that letters to other towns and to the Governor are drafted but will need to be revised if the mask ordinance is not passed during tonight’s City Council meeting. **Stephanie** will send the memo to the Council (reiterating support for mask ordinance and recommending masks with exhalation vents or valves will not qualify to meet requirement) as approved by the Task Force last week, on letterhead today.

Stephanie reviewed changes to COVID dashboard. NH data has a new look. MA data by county not available this week. ME removed for now based on relatively low threat levels.

Chamber Chat with Ann and Bianca took place on Friday, audience was small, much of Q/A was on the subject of moving activities indoors as the weather changes.

3. Testing updates, FAQ – second draft has been circulated, with many comments by email and continuing during this meeting. Aiming for a 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level with factual details regarding types of tests, local availability, and processes (not testing capacity as it is likely to evolve). People want to know how to get the test and what kind of test to get; we want them to understand relative accuracy as well. **Kathie** will revise into a 3<sup>rd</sup> draft.

4. City Council Meeting tonight includes 2nd mask ordinance reading. Need to register in order to participate. The public is able to comment.

5. Autumn Plans - How to use the information we are gathering on these topics, ventilation and testing? We are developing an FAQ for the latter and may consider for the former. We need to be consistent w/r/t information Task Force and City provide to the public. Is Public Health responsible for indoor reopenings and if so, how can we support them? Their role may be limited to establishments licensed to serve food.

6. Chamber Chat report – as above under Public Information

7. Next meeting time will be decided by email.