

# VMG COVID-19 UPDATE

Monday, June 8, 2020

Issue # 57

I hope everyone had a restful weekend. Massachusetts is “reopening” the economy today. We’re in Phase 2 of the Reopen Massachusetts Plan. You can see an extensive list of what’s allowed to open and restrictions here: <https://www.mass.gov/news/reopening-massachusetts-baker-polito-administration-initiates-transition-to-second-phase-of>

With everything reopening here and around the country, and with all the protesting and marches, it’s still very important to remember that there is no treatment and no vaccine. We all need to keep up our vigilance and avoid spreading the virus as best we can.

In an article in the *New York Times* on Saturday, Roni Caryn Rabin wrote that reopening is far more complicated than locking down. When we closed the economy, the rules were simpler. Stay home. Only go to work if you have an essential job. But reopening requires a lot of planning and thinking about decisions and things that used to be “automatic.” So she suggests remembering the 4 C’s to help think about what to do and what not to do:

- Contact
- Confinement
- Crowds
- And reasonable Choices.

It’s not unlike what we’ve been talking about for the last 7 weeks or so. For Contact, maintain social distancing, always use masks, wash your hands a lot and no handshakes.

Avoid sustained contacts (15 or more minutes) in Confined spaces. Use the open air wherever possible. If indoors and social distancing is limited, open windows and make sure air circulation and venting is good.

Avoid Crowds whenever possible. People like to go to restaurants and bars and the reopening plan permits outdoor dining now. But remember that we still have to think about how we interact and that alcohol tends to get in the way of judgment.

Finally remember that when you make Choices you’re not just choosing for yourself. When you make a choice to relax social distancing or get into crowded spaces, you’re also bringing that “choice” home to your families, neighbors and friends.

The *Boston Globe* released a brief video detailing how the virus spread in Massachusetts. You can see that video here:

<https://www.facebook.com/globe/videos/259758518464773/>

There's going to be a lot of pressure to get "back to normal." Hundreds of thousands of people will be returning to work or out and about in cities across Massachusetts, New York and New England. Watch the video and let's be more careful now.

### **National, State, Regional**

There is still varied experience with the coronavirus across the country. Some areas, including most of the northeast, are seeing declines in new cases while others are seeing increases. We don't yet know the effects of the mass protests on viral spread but we can expect it may be significant.

There continues to be talk about a "candidate vaccine" being ready for early 2021 but it really is too soon to tell how much of this is wishful and desperate thinking, how much is tactical marketing and promotion, and how much is scientifically feasible.

The focus has shifted in our region and across the state to bringing patients back to care as safely as possible (for patients, staff, and practitioners).

### **At VMG**

From Gina:

We are in the process of continuing to review Phase 2 requirement for healthcare organizations and for VMG.

Our Severe Weather Conditions policy will be revised to provide guidance for care being provided outside of the health centers and for steps to support safety for staff and patients at all times. The revised policy will be sent out as soon as revisions are completed.

We have developed a role for a Health Care Greeter to support main entrance screening functions and foot traffic control. This will be a temporary position for the summer months.

Finally for today, Anne Applebaum, writing in *The Atlantic* about how politicians and others have "collaborated" on supporting positions and actions that would have been considered antithetical to their beliefs. Here's her final thought from that article:

"I leave anyone who has the bad luck to be in public life at this moment with a final thought from Władysław Bartoszewski, who was a member of the wartime Polish underground, a prisoner of both the Nazis and the Stalinists, and then, finally, the foreign minister in two Polish democratic governments. Late in his life—he lived to be 93—he summed up the philosophy that had guided him through all of these tumultuous political changes. It was not idealism that drove him, or big ideas, he said. It was this: *Warto być przyzwoitym*—"Just try to be decent." Whether you were decent—that's what will be remembered."

Good advice, I think.

And now, this....

- Please wash your hands (often),
- Don't touch your face,
- Maintain social/physical distancing (it works),
- Definitely wear a mask (it is not a political statement; it's a public health good),
- Continue to be in touch with and take care of each other, and help to educate everyone.

Be well,

Joel

Be patient; be mindful