

OneMa1ze Covid Advisory Team

12.8.20

Team Members (*present)

Dr. Mary Le, Pediatrician *

Dr. Robin Walker, Physician *

Dr. Mark Rogers, Physician *

Dr. Chau Kovach, Physician *

Dr. Brooke Grizzell, Physician *

Cathy Fulks, Social Worker *

Matt Gallagher, Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor *

Ex-Officio Member

Dr. Nicole Rogers, WSU, Public Health Science

Current Resources

[CDC Morbidity and Mobility Weekly Report](#)

[CDC- When to Quarantine](#)

Meeting Notes

Review current science/medical updates

The district has implemented rapid COVID testing on site for students and staff experiencing symptoms. Staff have been testing staff and students for a few weeks by appointment. To date, 97 tests have been administered with a 33% positive rate. The diagnostic testing practice, once students and staff return to school, will allow those experiencing symptoms who have not been identified as a close contact to avoid quarantines with a negative test.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) adopted modified quarantine guidance for individuals considered close contacts but are asymptomatic. The new guidelines allow students or staff who do not experience symptoms to return to school/work after 10 days, or after 7 days with a negative PCR test taken on or after the 6th day from the close contact. The Sedgwick County Health Department adopted these guidelines on Monday and the district now follows them.

The Kansas Department of Education, with support from KDHE and the Kansas COVID Workgroup for Kids, have modified their Navigating Change guidelines to allow for students in Pre-Kindergarten through 5th grade to remain in school even when county or district gating criteria indicate a hybrid or remote learning model should be implemented. The guidance is based on Kansas data identifying this age group as a low risk to become infected or transmit the virus.

Doctors shared updates and opinions on the status of the COVID vaccines which may soon be available. They continue to be encouraged by the effectiveness and are optimistic approval will be granted. They expressed confidence in the trial and testing process and encourage those who qualify to get vaccinated. Members believe educators may be eligible for vaccinations between mid-January and mid-February. Trial participants have experienced symptoms after the first few days following the first shot and the district may need to prepare for this effect on staff.

Review gating criteria and current data/trends

Gating data was discussed briefly and team members are encouraged by the current case trends in the county but still anticipate cases to rise following the recent holiday. They believe the next few weeks will be a good indicator of how positive cases may trend following the Christmas holiday. While the county has added new restrictions, they are unlikely restrictive enough to curb current trends much due to the prevalence of the virus in the community.

One team member described the status of hospital capacity and staffing shortages due to a significant increase in COVID patients. While beds may be available, the medical and support staff needed to use the beds are not available.

The district is collecting case and quarantine information on students and staff during remote learning to the extent possible. The superintendent shared that positive cases have dropped significantly since the transition to remote learning. At this time, most cases still appear to originate from family members or friends outside of school but there have been a few incidents of spread among school groups. Cases and subsequent quarantines involving two high school basketball teams required a temporary suspension of practices and games for them.

Learning model update and considerations

Team members shared concern for the continuation of winter athletics while incident and positivity rates are high but are supportive of continuing them as the district is able. Overall, the team does not recommend allowing spectators at indoor events.

Recommendations regarding learning models were mixed among team members but generally encourage a transition to in-person learning for grades PK-5 beginning January 4 if staffing allows. If community positive case rates remain at a reasonable level, team members recommend a transition to a hybrid learning model for students in grades 6-12 if possible.

The team will convene again prior to the holiday break to evaluate case trends and updates on vaccination timelines in order to provide additional recommendations for the new calendar year.

Finally, members wish to express the importance of continued mitigation strategies of face coverings, hand washing, and social distancing.