



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

ROBERT GORDON  
DIRECTOR

## MEMORANDUM

Date: August 10, 2020

To: Health Officers, Local Public Health Department Medical Directors

From: Joneigh S. Khaldun, MD, MPH, FACEP  
Chief Medical Executive and Chief Deputy for Health  
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)

Thank you for your ongoing partnership in this historic public health response. As you intimately know, Michigan is focused on quickly testing, tracing, and isolating all cases of COVID-19. MDHHS wants to be sure that every community across the state has the resources and support it needs to effectively execute this containment strategy. Our aim is to effectively trace as many cases as possible so we can save as many lives as possible. To achieve the results that all of us aspire to, this memo offers a shared performance framework, and describes assistance and support within that framework.

Following conversations with many of you, MDHHS has defined goals around key metrics for LHD case investigation and contact tracing. For more information on these metrics, please visit [https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/Case\\_Investigation\\_and\\_Contact\\_Tracing\\_Targets\\_Memo\\_696741\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/Case_Investigation_and_Contact_Tracing_Targets_Memo_696741_7.pdf). Our goal, of course, is not just to hit arbitrary metrics, but to contain the spread of the disease by isolating positive cases and getting their close contacts in quarantine. While we are working on more sophisticated ways of assessing containment, these measures are our best proxies today for our ability to reduce spread.

The goals we identified earlier this summer are: 90% of case investigation interviews attempted within 24 hours; 75% of case investigation interviews completed within 24 hours; 50% of cases will have a minimum of one contact identified within 24 hours; 75% of cases will have race and ethnicity documented within 7 calendar days; 90% of initial outreach for close contact monitoring attempted within 24 hours; and 75% of initial outreach for close contact monitoring completed within 24 hours.

Over the last several months, we have seen improvements in these measures. However, we are still not consistently meeting our goals statewide. Recently, our outcomes on contact tracing and case investigation have noticeably declined. The Department is cognizant that LHDs face barriers to case investigation and contact tracing that are out of their control, including staffing constraints, challenges getting useable contact information from labs, and the timeliness of lab reports. MDHHS is working to address these barriers and understands they may impact LHDs. At the same time, we all share the goal of improving our performance.

To combat community spread, the Department is introducing an enhanced technical assistance process. We will be grouping LHDs based on performance on the metrics described above. This process will begin with establishing a “composite score” of the case investigation metrics as described in Table 1 below. MDHHS staff will review these composite scores in the context of case counts, trends, and MDHHS assistance to determine a final categorization.

Each LHD will be sorted into Green, Yellow, Orange, and Red categories, as detailed in Table 2 below. LHDs classified as Green are consistently meeting the state’s targets, while LHDs identified as Yellow, Orange, and Red are falling below and may be engaged for technical assistance. These composite scores will be calculated on a weekly basis. If, on average, an LHD falls below the targets for a week, the TA team takes a deeper look at the context (volume and trends) to determine whether TA could help (orange), if no immediate action is necessary but we should “watch” next week’s performance (yellow), or if signs point to positive trends and there’s no need to continue watching (green).

*Table 1: Metrics*

<b>Metric</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Weight in Composite Score</b>
<b>Metric 1</b> % attempted	90%	35%
<b>Metric 2</b> % completed	75%	35%
<b>Metric 3</b> % with contacts	50%	15%
<b>Metric 4</b> % with race/ethnicity	75%	15%

*Table 2: LHD Categories*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Green</b>	No action needed
<b>Yellow</b>	Monitor for TA
<b>Orange</b>	TA provided by MDHHS staff
<b>Red</b>	Follow up with Dr. Khaldun and other MDHHS leaders

This process is intended to help quickly identify areas of concern so that MDHHS can offer resources to address the challenge. LHDs categorized as Orange, and therefore receiving technical assistance, will work with MDHHS staff to develop a plan to improve performance over the subsequent two weeks. If there is not an improvement in performance in that time period, leadership from the MDHHS Public Health Administration will engage the LHD to understand barriers to improvement and discuss whether MDHHS should take on a more intensive role.

MDHHS is eager to work with LHDs to remove obstacles to successful, timely case investigation and contact tracing. MDHHS can provide a range of support across hiring, data entry and data analysis, technology, and general technical assistance for case investigation and contact tracing. The state is already doing contact tracing for many LHDs to increase local capacity for case investigations and other COVID-19 response. For some jurisdictions, MDHHS is also doing case investigations, and the Department is moving swiftly to be able to support more LHDs with investigations. If the Department's handling of additional interviews and tracing would improve performance, that is a step that we will look to take together.

Our planned timeline is as follows:

<b>Week of</b>	<b>Event</b>
August 10	Introduce process, initial categorization included in weekly LHD dashboard
August 17	TA for first set of Orange
August 24	TA for second set of Orange
August 31	Leadership conversation for first set of Red
September 7	Leadership conversation for second set of Red
Ongoing	Weekly LHD categorization, ongoing TA for newly identified Orange, escalation to Red as needed

We encourage you to reach out to MDHHS at any time to discuss what type of assistance could be valuable. The Department is here to play a supportive role as we work together, in partnership, to protect the health and welfare of Michigan residents during these challenging times.

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For the latest information on Michigan's response to COVID-19, please visit [www.michigan.gov/coronavirus](http://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus). You may also email our Community Health Emergency Coordination Center at: [checcdeptcoor@michigan.gov](mailto:checcdeptcoor@michigan.gov)

# MDHHS Case Investigation & Contact Tracing Support

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services is able to provide case investigation and contact tracing support to Local Health Departments to assist with increased workloads due to COVID-19.

There are several types of assistance available. If you have any questions or would like to request support, please contact Joe Coyle ([CoyleJ@michigan.gov](mailto:CoyleJ@michigan.gov)) or Katie Macomber ([MacomberK@michigan.gov](mailto:MacomberK@michigan.gov)).



**Contact Tracing and 14-Day Monitoring:** MDHHS can support LHDs with contact tracing and monitoring. A statewide pool of trained volunteers and staff make calls using remote call center and texting technology. Hybrid options are available, with MDHHS volunteers supporting LHD staff, enabled by the Traceforce technology system.



**Tracing Technology:** MDHHS has developed remote call center technology, known as "Traceforce," to expedite and simplify the contact tracing process. The platform integrates data from MDSS and supports automated daily contact monitoring via text message. This technology is available for free to all LHDs.



**Temporary Staffing Contracts:** MDHHS has temporary staffing contracts that can be leveraged by LHDs to bring in short-term staff with public health or healthcare experience through the Department of Management and Budget's MiDEAL Program.



**Case Investigation:** MDHHS is currently assisting several LHDs with case investigation and is quickly hiring new staff to provide additional support.



**Text Messaging:** MDHHS has developed text messaging technology to allow LHD staff to send text messages to residents from a web-based platform. The Department is also exploring a more sophisticated, flexible SMS solution to share with LHDs when available.



**Quarantine and Isolation Supports:** MDHHS has developed a partnership with Michigan 211 to help residents find resources to successfully quarantine/isolate at home to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Residents can call 844-587-2485 or call the main 211 line and select the prompt for COVID support resources.



**Public Health Volunteers:** LHDs can request volunteers from their local communities who have signed up to assist with the COVID-19 public health response. Many of these volunteers have a professional background in public health and have been trained on MDHHS contact tracing technology.



**General Technical Assistance:** The Department is also available to provide general technical assistance and training to LHDs for case investigations, contact tracing, and other COVID response efforts. MDHHS is able to assist with technology solutions, MDSS and OMS data analysis, and more.