TRANSCRIPT: Monday,September 28th, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

Excerpt: So beginning over the weekend, our team was in touch with the White House to further discussions on rapid testing resources for New Jersey. Following those conversations and as was laid out in a video meeting three of us just came from, we've been notified that New Jersey will receive a total of $2.6 million of the BinaxNOW rapid tests being produced by Abbott Labs. This is an antigen test that can provide results in 15 minutes with a very easy nasal swab, as opposed to the straight up, turn left variety that we all started with. The first 170,000 of those tests will be coming within the next two weeks. These new tests will significantly scale up our testing capabilities. **The Department of Health obviously, under Judy's leadership, we'll be working with our federal and local partners on a distribution plan.**

TRANSCRIPT: Wednesday,September 30th, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

We knew, as we've been saying going in, that there would be positive cases in our schools and our overarching aim remains ensuring that our schools do not themselves become the epicenters of new outbreaks. We have in place the protocols and guidance to ensure that when identified, a case is removed as quickly and carefully as possible from the building environment.

Governor Murphy speaking: **Secondly, Judy, to the White House news we talked about on Monday, having that ability for the school nurse to give that test and get the answer in 15 minutes with 98-plus percent accuracy will be a huge weapon to deploy with our schools. We don't have that yet, that supply of tests is coming. The Binax supplies are coming in the next 10 days to two weeks, but that'll be a game changer.**

In-school transmission is considered the transmission of the virus between students and/or school staff that occurs on school property in the context of academic activities. Currently, we are posting that there are 11 confirmed outbreaks linked to in-school transmission that have been verified by the local health departments. The outbreaks are in 11 different schools. There are 43 cases linked to these 11 outbreaks and although we track cases within each outbreak, the outbreaks are actually what drive public health actions, not necessarily the number of cases associated with the outbreak.

As we have covered in the past, the department has issued COVID-19 recommendations for schools that cover steps to take to respond to cases and outbreaks in schools. Much of these decisions are based on what the local public health investigation finds, but we have developed a short matrix, which I have shared with you in the past, to help guide the decision making. If there is one confirmed case in a school, the school can remain open. Any students or staff in close contact with that one case is excluded from school for a period of 14 days. If there are two or more cases in the same classroom, the school can remain open. Any close contacts of the case are excluded from the school for 14 days. Local health officials would make recommendations on whether the entire classroom should be considered exposed.

If there are two or more cases within 14 days linked to an exposure outside of the school setting, the school can remain open. Any close contacts of the case are excluded from the school for 14 days. If there are two or more cases within a two-week period linked together by a school activity, local health officials would make recommendations on whether to close the school based on their investigation.

If a significant community outbreak is impacting multiple staff, students and families served by the school, closure of the school for 14 days should be considered. If there are two or more cases within a two week period that occur across multiple classrooms, and a clear connection between the cases cannot be easily identified, it's recommended that the school be closed for 14 days. And if the school falls in a region with a very high risk on our dashboard, it would be red; a very high risk area according to the department's activity level report, the school should be closed until transmission has decreased.

We have divided the state into regions, as you know, for the tracking of school outbreaks because local health departments have the data and knowledge about the impact of COVID-19 in their communities. That's important because it can inform local planning and response actions. School closure is a local decision that should be made by school administrators in consultation with the local public health officials.