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From: Matthew Zahn, MD, Deputy Health Officer, Health Care Agency

Cc: David Núñez, MD, Medical Director

Subject: County Guidance Regarding Resumption of Youth Sports

As detailed in the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) in the communication (issued on February 19, 2021 and updated on March 4, 2021) on the subject of Outdoor and Indoor Youth and Recreational Adult Sports

(<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/outdoor-indoor-recreational-sports.aspx>), Orange County is now permitting the resumption of school athletic team practice and competitions for specified youth sports according to the current County Tier (with additional parameters for certain sports while the county is in purple or red tier).

The Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA) recommends review and adherence to the CDPH general guidance which includes the following topics:

- **Face coverings** to be worn by participants and coaches during practice, conditioning and **during competition**, even during heavy exertion as tolerated.
- **Physical distancing:** Maintain at least six feet of distance between sport participants and others to the maximum extent possible, including when on the sidelines; and during play for outdoor high-contact and moderate-contact sports.
- **Informed Consent**
- **Testing**
- **Hygiene and equipment sanitation**
- **Limitations on mixing by participants**
- **Indoor venue capacity limitations**
- **Travel considerations**
- **Return to sports after infection**

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Quarantine for Close Contacts

In addition, any athletes with close contact exposures to COVID-19 cases will need to comply with existing **quarantine guidance** as follows:

- Recommend that all close contacts be tested; symptomatic contacts should be prioritized for immediate testing, and asymptomatic contacts should be recommended to be tested 5-7 days from last exposure.
- Contacts who test negative must still complete the required 10-day quarantine at home as defined in the CDPH guidance.
- Return to school after 10 days from last exposure unless symptoms develop or tests positive. Continue symptom monitoring through 14 days after last exposure.
- Athletes who cannot comply with face coverings and social distancing during sports activities (practice or competition) on days 11-14 following exposure, will need to **refrain from sports participation for 14 days**.

Play in Less Restrictive Tiers

The following categories of sports are now permitted:

- Outdoor high-contact sports (orange tier) can now be played in the purple or red tier.
- Outdoor moderate-contact sports (red tier) can be played in the purple tier.
- A team in any sport, including indoor sports, may return to competition and contact practice at any time, if the team adheres to the additional requirements imposed on collegiate sports, as specified in the Institutions of Higher Education Guidance, dated September 30, 2020 (<https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-higher-education--en.pdf>).

Schools that resume any of these permitted sports must implement and strictly adhere to the additional general guidance detailed by CDPH for each sport.

Testing

Schools that have resumed outdoor high-contact sports including football, rugby and water polo (while in purple and red tier) are required to conduct testing only when adjusted case rates for the county are between 14-7 per 100,000. Otherwise, testing for outdoor high-contact sports is strongly encouraged.

Indoor sports are required to conduct **daily antigen or periodic (weekly or biweekly) PCR testing** as detailed by CDPH, regardless of the county case rate.

For high-risk contact sports (basketball, field hockey, football, ice hockey, lacrosse, rowing, rugby, soccer, squash, volleyball, water polo, and wrestling), competition between teams is permitted only if the team can provide COVID-19 testing and results of all athletes and support staff within 48 hours of each competition.

Please adhere to the following general guidance on interpretation of positive test results in asymptomatic students and coaching staff without known exposure to COVID-19:

- All student athletes and coaching staff who test positive as part of this screening process should be treated as COVID-19 cases.
- Students/staff who test positive (antigen or PCR test) must begin home isolation as soon as the positive result is reported and continue isolation until 10 days since the date of the test.
- Teams should refrain from testing asymptomatic individuals with prior confirmed COVID-19 infection within the past 90 days.
- If an asymptomatic, unexposed, student tests positive on antigen testing, and subsequently has a negative PCR test within 1-2 days, then HCA will potentially reconsider whether to treat that student as having COVID-19. Consultation with HCA is recommended in these circumstances.
- Confirmed cases (including asymptomatic) will require evaluation of close contacts for required quarantine.