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|  | The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  Executive Office of Health and Human Services  Department of Public Health  Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences  305 South Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130 | |  |
| CHARLES D. BAKER  Governor  KARYN E. POLITO  Lieutenant Governor | Tel: (617) 983-6550  Fax: (617) 983-6925  [www.mass.gov/dph](http://www.mass.gov/dph) | MARYLOU SUDDERS  Secretary  MONICA BHAREL, MD, MPH Commissioner | |

**Memorandum**

**TO:** Hospital-based Providers and Infection Preventionists

**FROM:** Catherine M. Brown, DVM, MSc, MPH

State Epidemiologist

Larry Madoff, MD

Medical Director

**SUBJECT:** Reporting of Vaccine Breakthrough COVID-19 Cases Resulting in Hospitalization or Death

**DATE:** May 25, 2021

As of May 24, 2021, there had been 3,343 instances of COVID-19 infection in over 2.9 million fully vaccinated individuals (a rate of 0.11%). Data from breakthrough disease in fully vaccinated persons is important for tracking real-world vaccine efficacy, identifying waning immunity, and signaling possible emergence of viral variants that impact vaccine effectiveness. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is able to identify vaccine breakthrough cases by matching electronically reported laboratory results with immunization reports.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has asked states to focus on vaccine breakthrough cases with severe disease resulting in hospitalization or death. Although routine public health case investigation activities and vital records matching provides some of this information, hospitalization data in particular is incomplete. In order to meet federal reporting requirements and to ensure that Massachusetts data are complete enough to achieve the stated purpose, DPH has developed a one-page form for reporting.

**Providers should use the attached form to report ONLY vaccine breakthrough COVID-19 cases with severe disease resulting in hospitalization or death.** **Vaccine breakthrough disease cases are defined below.**

* **Persons diagnosed with COVID-19 with a disease onset or earliest positive laboratory result date (whichever is earlier) more than 2 weeks after receiving a complete vaccine series.**
* **Persons who have a history of a recent (within the last 45 days) positive COVID-19 test are excluded.**
* **A complete vaccine series defined as having received all recommended doses of an FDA-emergency use authorized or WHO-emergency use listed vaccine.**

The reporting form is attached for your convenience and will also be available at <https://www.mass.gov/lists/infectious-disease-case-report-forms>. Completed forms should be submitted to the DPH confidential fax line at 617-983-6220; this number is included at the top of the reporting form.

**Questions can be directed to the DPH Division of Epidemiology’s 24/7 line at 617-983-6800.**