



Reopening New York



Large Scale Performing Arts and Entertainment

These guidelines apply to all ticketed and non-ticketed, seated and standing audience at performances and live entertainment events held in public or private venues with an indoor capacity of more than 1,500 attendees and/or outdoor capacity of more than 2,500 attendees. For the purpose of this guidance, “performing arts and entertainment” encompasses all activities undertaken in the preparation, production, practice, and presentation of in-person performances and live entertainment including but not limited to music, dance, opera, drama, comedy, and other theatre or audio and/or visual arts performed before a live audience (e.g., plays, musicals, concerts, lectures, speeches). Prior to hosting events with attendees, at least 5 days in advance of the event, venues with an indoor or outdoor capacity of 10,000 attendees or greater must submit a venue and event plan to the New York State Department of Health, and venues with an indoor capacity of 1,500 to 9,999 attendees or outdoor capacity of 2,500 to 9,999 attendees or greater must submit a venue and event plan to the respective county health department or local public health authority. See “[Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Large Scale Performing Arts and Entertainment](#)” for full details.

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, owners/operators of any performing arts and entertainment venue or production must remain current with any changes to state and federal requirements related to performing arts venues and auditoriums and incorporate those changes into their operations. This guidance is not intended to replace any existing applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and standards.

	Mandatory	Recommended Best Practices
Physical Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For indoor venues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit patron presence to no more than 10% of the maximum seated capacity for a fixed seating venue or 10% of the maximum occupancy for a flexible seating venue, exclusive of employees and performers/talent. All patron attendees must present proof of recent negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result or completed immunization, as described below, if patron presence exceeds the State’s social gathering limit (100 attendees, as of 4/2/21). • For indoor venues without fixed or flexible seating available for patrons but with sufficient area to designate spaces for patron viewing, limit capacity at any performance/event to no more than 10% of the maximum occupancy of the area available for patrons to view the event (i.e., approx. 100 square ft. per patron or 250 square ft. per group of 4 patrons). All patron attendees must present proof of recent negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result or completed immunization. ✓ For outdoor venues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See “Interim COVID 19 Guidance for Large Scale Performing Arts and Entertainment” for the definition of outdoor venues. • Limit patron presence to no more than 20% of the maximum seated capacity for a fixed seating venue or 20% of the maximum occupancy for a flexible seating venue, exclusive of employees and performers/talent. • For outdoor venues without fixed or flexible seating available for patrons but with sufficient area to designate spaces for patron viewing, limit capacity at any performance/event to no more than 20% of the maximum capacity of the area available for patrons to view the event (i.e., approx. 100 square ft. per patron or 250 square ft. per group of 4 patrons). All patron attendees must present proof of recent negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result or proof of completed immunization, and at least 6 ft. must be maintained between patrons who are not part of the same party/household/family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Where practical, recommend that individuals from different parties/households/families maintain greater than 6 ft. (e.g., 8-9 ft.) of distance. ✓ Minimize the number of groups in each row to avoid close contact when individuals leave their seat to use the restroom or visit the concession area. ✓ Consider making seats available in small groups or “blocks” that allow members of the same party/household/family to sit together and remain appropriately distanced from other groups of patrons. ✓ Establish a system of patron compliance with, and employee or event staff enforcement of, the requirements within this guidance, including but not limited to social distancing and face coverings. Such system of compliance may specify penalties for patrons in case of violations (e.g., one face covering warning allowed before ejection from venue). ✓ Maintain adequate lighting in the venue for as long as possible before the performance or event so that patrons can be seated or reach their assigned seat, in accordance with social distancing requirements. ✓ For events that require bag security checks, implement a restriction on bags, or require patrons to bring items in clear bags. ✓ Consider closing any common seating areas at the venue, excluding patron viewing sections.



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Physical Distancing (Cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Only permit individuals entry into the venue if they wear an acceptable face covering at all times, provided they are over age 2 and able to medically tolerate one. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals may temporarily remove their face covering when seated in assigned area to eat/drink. • Performers/talent may temporarily remove their face covering during performances, rehearsals, and other on-stage interactions, or when it may interfere with a core activity, such as hair, makeup, or wardrobe. They must put on face coverings as soon as practicable following those activities. ✓ Ensure at least 6 ft. of distance is maintained between employees and performers/talent at all times, unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided that core activities and functions (e.g., wardrobe, hair, makeup, performing) may require employees and/or performers/talent coming within 6 ft. of distance, such activities and functions must be identified and a protocol for mitigation of risk for involved individuals must be implemented. ✓ Ensure that a distance of at least 12 ft. is maintained, or that an appropriate physical barrier is installed, between performers/talent and the audience. ✓ Ensure that a distance of at least 6 ft. is maintained between employees and patrons at all times, with the exception of patrons who are members of the same party/household/family, unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance (e.g., security). ✓ In areas where employee-patron interactions frequently occur and 6 ft. of distance is not possible, enact physical barriers between employees and patrons (e.g., ticket booths, concessions, ticket-taker stations). ✓ Establish venue-specific protocols to ensure that patrons not from the same party/household/family maintain appropriate distance during parking (if applicable), ingress, admissions, intermissions/breaks, and egress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consider the use of dedicated work zones within the venue and establish a system that prevents overlapping departments in the same work space at the same time. For example, a color-coded system or other visible indicators to facilitate identification of zones and appropriate access for employees and performers/talent may help with capacity and social distancing.



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Physical Distancing (Cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For performances and events with seated viewers, develop an audience seating arrangement that ensures at least 6 ft. of distance between patrons who are not part of the same party/household/family. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require reservations and assign seats to patrons to ensure distancing. • Within a row, limit seating such that at least 2 seats are unoccupied between each group of patrons, unless venue seating naturally allows 6 ft. of distance between seats. • Limit seating in traditional seating arrangements to every other row unless venue seating naturally allows 6 ft. of distance between rows. • Encourage patrons to remain seated once the event begins, unless they're visiting the restroom, purchasing items from concession, or exiting. ✓ Where applicable, suites or boxes must have specific patron capacity limitations that allow for appropriate distancing among patrons who may be from different parties/households/families (e.g., lesser of 10 people or 25% of the maximum occupancy of such space). ✓ For venues with table seating, follow seating requirements as stipulated in DOH’s “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Food Services.” or “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Indoor Food Services in New York City.” ✓ For performances with standing viewers, develop an audience standing arrangement that ensures patrons maintain a distance of greater than 6 ft. (e.g., 8-9 ft.) at all times between all employees and all patrons, with the exception of patrons who are members of the same party/household/family, unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the time of publication, indoor performances with standing viewers remain prohibited with limited exceptions as described below. ✓ Maintain sufficient employees/event staff to direct patrons to their seats to ensure adherence to social distancing requirements and avoid congregation. 	



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Operational Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For indoor events, ensure that all attendees are assigned seats and that attendees are not congregating except when seated with members of their same party/household/family. Attendees should only stand when necessary or under limited conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For venues with unique architecture that prevent stable installation of seats or if providing seating for patrons would compromise safety (e.g., attendee viewing area on an incline/decline where temporary seats may not provide a stable seating option). • For incidental, non-ticketed performances, such as solo singers, bands, or other performers performing in public locations, in accordance with DOH’s “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Small and Medium Scale Performing Arts and Entertainment.” ✓ Ensure all employees/performers/talent receive training on COVID-19 safety, proper hand and respiratory hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection protocols. ✓ Where applicable, stagger performance/event times and provide sufficient time between events to avoid crowding at exits/entrances, and ensure thorough cleaning and disinfection after the event ends. ✓ Prohibit any direct, close contact interactions between patrons and performers/talent (e.g., autographs). ✓ Operate in strict accordance with DOH’s “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Food Services” or, as applicable, “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Indoor Food Services in New York City,” and for all restaurants, bars, and/or concessions at the venue. However, wherever this guidance applies stricter standards, abide by this guidance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that patrons only consume food and beverages while seated. • Abide by any applicable curfews on food and beverage services (as of 4/2/21, cease operations no later than 11:00 PM). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hold remote or virtual casting and auditions, to the extent possible. ✓ Perform scouting activities for venues/performance locations as virtually or remotely as practicable. ✓ Consider initial programming within the venue that requires fewer in-person employees or performers/talent to execute (e.g., limit backup dancers, musical accompaniment, number of panelists) as venue and production operations resume; and, when practical consider limiting initial performance length and/or shortening/eliminating intermission(s). ✓ Due to the increased risk that activities such as singing, shouting, projecting one’s voice loudly, or playing wind instruments could potentially lead to increased production of respiratory droplets, consider ways to reduce the amount of high aerosol producing programming or implement appropriate risk mitigation measures (e.g., additional spacing, PPE, testing). ✓ Have performers/talent arrive at the venue “show ready,” to the extent possible. ✓ Make efforts to digitize all disposable items, to the extent possible (e.g., scripts, music sheets, call sheets, brochures, playbills). ✓ Assign patrons designated entry times at particular entrances to reduce congregation during ingress, and communicate this information to attendees ahead of arrival (i.e., color coded tickets, print information on tickets, send information via email or text). ✓ Implement touchless payment options, as available, to minimize handling cash, credit cards, etc. where possible. ✓ Rearrange patron waiting areas (e.g., waiting lines, lobbies, parking areas) to maximize social distance among other patrons and minimize interaction with other individuals who are not member of same party/household/family in the area.



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Operational Activity (Cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure that all patrons are ticketholders, in order to appropriately manage capacity restrictions, plan and control for the movement of individuals, and prevent unnecessary congregation near entrances/exits. ✓ Open a sufficient number of entrances/exits at the venue during ingress and egress to reduce congregation, and ensure that all entry points are staffed to control movements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For performances and events where the number of attendees will exceed the social gathering limit, extend the perimeter and entryway to allow for additional space to validate patron entry credentials (e.g., valid ticket, proof of negative diagnostic test result or proof of immunization) and process patrons during ingress to reduce congregation.
Air Handling and Building Systems	<p>For venues with indoor areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure central HVAC system filtration meets the highest rated filtration compatible with the currently installed filter rack and air handling systems, at a minimum MERV-13, or industry equivalent or greater, as applicable, and as certified and documented by a certified HVAC technician, professional, or company, ASHRAE-certified professional, certified retro-commissioning professional, or New York licensed professional building engineer. ✓ For venues with central air handling systems that cannot handle the abovementioned minimum level of filtration, have a certified HVAC technician, professional, or company, ASHRAE-certified professional, certified retro-commissioning professional, or New York licensed professional building engineer document that the currently installed filter rack is incompatible with abovementioned minimum level of filtration and/or the air handling system would be unable to perform to the minimum level of heating and cooling that it was otherwise able to provide prior to the COVID-19 public health emergency if such a high degree of filtration (i.e., MERV-13 or greater) was installed. Retain such documentation for review. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venues that have a central air handling system who are unable to meet a filtration rating of MERV 13 or greater must adopt additional ventilation and/or air filtration mitigation protocols per CDC and ASHRAE recommendations. (See “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Large Scale Performing Arts and Entertainment” for full details). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For venues with central HVAC system filtration at a minimum of MERV-13, or industry equivalent or greater, consider adopting additional ventilation and air filtration mitigation protocols per CDC and ASHRAE recommendations, particularly for buildings with air handling systems older than 15 years. (See “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Large Scale Performing Arts and Entertainment” for full details).



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Air Handling and Building Systems (Cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Venues that do not have central air handling systems must adopt additional ventilation and air filtration mitigation protocols per CDC and ASHRAE recommendations. (See “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Large Scale Performing Arts and Entertainment” for full details). ✓ Before occupants return to a venue that has been entirely closed, complete pre-return checks, tasks, and assessments to ensure a healthy and safe environment. These systems include, but are not limited to, mechanical, water, elevator, and HVAC systems. 	
Protective Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure that all individuals wear acceptable face coverings at all times when within the venue, except as otherwise authorized within this guidance (e.g., patrons temporarily eating or drinking while seated and socially distanced from individuals who are not members of their same party/household/family, performers/talent conducting core activities/performing). ✓ Provided that core activities and functions (e.g., travel, wardrobe, hair, makeup, performing) may require employees and/or performers/talent coming within 6 ft. of distance, identify such activities and functions, and implement a protocol for mitigation of risk for involved individuals (e.g., physical barriers, face coverings or other personal protective equipment, abbreviated periods of time, air ventilation/filtration). ✓ Ensure that employees/event staff in close contact or proximity to performers/talent who are not wearing face coverings (e.g., hair stylists, makeup artists, costume attendants, sound technicians) wear both an acceptable face covering and additional PPE, such as a face shield or eye protection (e.g., goggles), for the duration of the activity requiring proximity. ✓ Where possible, musicians must wear masks throughout the performance (e.g., piano, guitar, cello). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Performers/talent who are not wearing a face covering during their performance (e.g., singing) or who are playing a wind, brass, or other breath-driven instrument should be separated from other performers by 12 ft. or an appropriate physical barrier, and, as possible, not directly facing one another (e.g., band members, orchestra, choirs, panelists).



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Protective Equipment (Cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide employees with an acceptable face covering at no cost and advise them to regularly clean or replace their face coverings if they become wet or soiled. ✓ Train employees and performers/talent on how to adequately put on, take off, clean, and discard PPE. ✓ Implement measures to limit the sharing of objects (e.g., check-out registers, ticket scanners), as well as the touching of shared surfaces, such as handrails or touchscreens; or require employees, performers/talent, and patrons to wear gloves when in contact with shared objects or frequently touched surfaces; or require employees, performers/talent, and patrons to perform hand hygiene before and after contact. 	
Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Adhere to hygiene/cleaning/disinfection requirements from the CDC and DOH and maintain logs documenting date, time, and scope of cleaning/disinfection. ✓ Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations, including handwashing with soap, running warm water, and paper towels, or alcohol based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities are not available. ✓ Make hand sanitizer available throughout common areas in the venue. ✓ Provide and encourage employees and event staff to use cleaning/disinfection supplies before and after use of shared and frequently touched surfaces (e.g., ticket scanners, registers, microphones, radios, railings, elevator buttons), followed by hand hygiene. ✓ Ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms. Ensure that performer/talent and employee areas (e.g., changing rooms, locker rooms) are appropriately and effectively cleaned/disinfected after each event. ✓ Ensure that props, costumes, and set materials are regularly cleaned/disinfected and appropriately stored between uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Have personnel, who are visible to patrons, designated for the cleaning and disinfection of heavy transit areas and high touch surfaces. ✓ Provide individual devices for communication (e.g., walkie-talkie, radios, microphones) to limit use of shared devices. ✓ Ensure that all costumes, uniforms, instruments, musical equipment, wigs, props, mics, and other essential items to the performance or event for performers/talent are assigned to individuals when possible to avoid sharing of objects. ✓ Collect and launder linens, as able, and encourage performers/talent to deposit used linens in designated bins without handling by other individuals. Assign cleaning staff to certain areas of the venue (e.g., FOH, BOH, changing rooms, locker rooms) in order to limit cross contamination throughout the facility. ✓ Consider closing or limiting access to communal fixtures or amenities in the venues that might present a risk of patron congregation or multiple touchpoints, such as promotional brochure stands in favor of individual distribution upon request.



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Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection (Cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Conduct regular cleaning/disinfection of the venue and more frequent cleaning/disinfection of high risk areas used by many individuals and for frequently touched surfaces. Refer to DOH Guidance and Department of Environmental Conservation list of products identified by the EPA as effective against COVID-19. ✓ Clean and disinfect all seating (e.g., chairs, armrests) after each performance or event, to the extent possible. ✓ For activities involving the handling of shared objects (e.g., payment devices, ticket kiosks), areas and/or surfaces (e.g., doors), ensure that such objects and areas are cleaned/disinfected daily, at minimum. 	
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Affirm you have reviewed and understand the state issued industry guidelines, and will implement them. ✓ Develop a communications plan employees, performers/talent, and patrons that includes applicable instructions, training, signage, and consistent means to provide individuals with information. ✓ Post signage reminding individuals to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning and disinfection protocols. ✓ Conspicuously post completed safety plans on site for performers/talent and employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Distribute clear documentation to patrons about safety/health precautions, including a pre-event announcement outlining safety and health protocols in effect at the venue.
Screening and Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure all public-facing employees, performers/talent, and employees whose job functions or roles involve close contact with performers/talent over age 2 to have received a negative diagnostic test result for COVID-19 using an FDA or DOH authorized PCR or other nucleic acid amplification test (NAATs) of comparable analytical sensitivity performance performed on a specimen collected within 72 hours of the event start time. Negative test results for COVID-19 from an FDA authorized antigen test performed on a specimen collected within 6 hours of the event start time may also be accepted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Perform screening remotely (e.g., by telephone or electronic survey), before people arrive, to the extent possible. ✓ Refer to DOH guidance regarding protocols and policies for employees seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after the close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19.

WEAR A MASK.

GET TESTED.

SAVE LIVES.



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Screening and Testing (Cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Such employees and performers/talent must present proof of the negative diagnostic test result to designated employees prior to, or immediately upon, arrival to the event. Certain employees/performers/talent must be tested for COVID-19 through a diagnostic test prior to their 1st event and must be tested weekly thereafter for as long as they are working at events at the venue. Alternatively, employees and performers/talent may provide proof of having completed the COVID-19 vaccination series at least 14 days prior to the event. <p>✓ For all performances and events where the number of attendees will exceed the social gathering limit (i.e., 100 attendees indoors or 200 attendees outdoors), require that all patrons over age 2, have received a negative diagnostic test result for COVID-19 using an FDA or DOH authorized PCR or other nucleic acid amplification test (NAATs) of comparable analytical sensitivity performance performed on a specimen collected within 72 hours of the event start time. Negative test results for COVID-19 from an FDA authorized antigen test performed on a specimen collected within 6 hours of the event start time may also be accepted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All patrons must present proof of the negative diagnostic test result to designated employees prior to, or immediately upon, arrival to the event. Alternatively, patrons may provide proof of having completed the COVID-19 vaccination series at least 14 days prior to the event. <p>✓ Deny entry to the venue to any public-facing employees, performers/talent, employees whose job functions or roles involve close contact with performers/talent, or patrons (at events with more than 100 attendees indoors or 200 attendees outdoors) who are over age 2 and fail to present a negative diagnostic test result or proof of immunization, as required above.</p>	



Reopening New York



Large Scale Performing Arts and Entertainment

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	Mandatory	Recommended Best Practices
Screening and Testing (Cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implement mandatory health screening for employees and performers/talent prior to any in-person performing arts and entertainment activities, including rehearsals and performances/events. For all ticketed events, mandatory health screening must also be implemented for patrons, prior to, or immediately upon, arrival to the venue, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperature checks for all ticketed patrons, employees, and performers/talent and deny entry to any individual who presents with a temperature of 100.4°F or greater, as well as any members of the individual's party who may have been in close contact with the patron within the past 10 days. • A questionnaire that determines whether the individual has COVID-19 symptoms, contacts, positive COVID-19 test, or recent travel. ✓ Require employees, performers/talent, and patrons to immediately disclose if and when their responses to any response to screening questions change. ✓ Deny entry to a ticketed event to any performer/talent, employee, or patron who fails the screening questionnaire or who receives a positive diagnostic test result for COVID-19, as well as any members of the patron's party who may have been in close contact with such patron within the past 10 days. ✓ Designate a site safety monitor, who, when notified of a confirmed positive COVID-19 case through a diagnostic test result for an individual who is currently or was recently present at the venue, must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notify the state and local health department of the confirmed positive case, • assist with contact tracing efforts to identify close or proximate contacts who may need to quarantine, • communicate to known individuals who may have been exposed to the positive case at the venue that a positive case was reported, contact tracing will be performed, close contacts will be notified, and additional cleaning and disinfection of the exposed area will be performed, and, 	



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During the COVID-19 public health emergency, owners/operators of any performing arts and entertainment venue or production must remain current with any changes to state and federal requirements related to performing arts venues and auditoriums and incorporate those changes into their operations. This guidance is not intended to replace any existing applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and standards.

	Mandatory	Recommended Best Practices
Screening and Testing (Cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dispatch appropriate staff or personnel to clean and disinfect the exposed areas. <p>✓ Cooperate with health department contact tracing efforts by identifying individuals at the venue who may have been in the same area at/around, the same time as any positive individual within the 48 hours before they began experiencing symptoms or had their sample collected for the diagnostic test, whichever is earlier.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a performer/talent or employee who has close contact with performers/talent receives a positive diagnostic test result, ensure that neither rehearsals nor performances/events proceed until contact tracing is completed and isolation of infected persons and quarantine of exposed persons is implemented. • In the case of performers/talent/employees showing symptoms of COVID-19 while in the venue, notify individuals in the surrounding area(s) or individuals who may be considered a close contact immediately with information on where the individual has been throughout the venue and further notify them if the symptomatic person tests positive for COVID-19. <p>✓ Maintain a log of every person, including performers/ talent and employees, who may have close or proximate contact with other individuals at the venue; excluding deliveries that are performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means.</p> <p>✓ For ticketed events, require each patron to provide contact information before or immediately upon arrival to the event, providing their full name, date of birth, address, and phone number or e mail for use in potential contact tracing efforts. Maintain record of the sign in data for a minimum period of 28 days and make such data available to State and local health authorities upon request.</p>	