

## New Mexico Medical Advisory Team (MAT) Assessment

**MAT Workgroup Name:** Public Health/Epi/Occupational Medicine

**Date:** May 12, 2020

### Question or request:

Should religious gatherings resume singing by choirs, congregations, and staff at services or gatherings?

### Recommendation/s in bullet form:

- The MAT group recommends that faith-based organizations not have choir or congregation singing or chanting at religious services or special events for the near future.
- Singing and chanting by single individuals is a high-risk activity for transmission and should be limited and done under strict COVID Safe Practices.

### Assessment:

An expert panel of physicians and medical experts convened by the National Association of Teachers of Singing, the American Choral Directors Association, Chorus America, the Barbershop Harmony Society, and the Performing Arts Medical Association concluded that there is no safe way for singers to rehearse together until there is a COVID-19 vaccine and a 95% effective treatment in place, with estimates at least 18-24 months away.

A choir rehearsal in Washington State in March served as a potential super-spreading event and resulted in multiple transmission and deaths among members.

Cloth face masks and other non-medical personal protective equipment are not expected to significantly decrease the risk of transmission from singing and chanting.

**Red flags and concerns:** None

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### Resources/Reference:

<https://www.middleclassartist.com/post/nats-panel-of-experts-lays-out-sobering-future-for-singers-no-vaccine-no-safe-public-singing>

<https://www.businessinsider.com/two-people-dead-from-coronavirus-after-super-spreading-event-2020-3>

Aerosol emission and superemission during human speech increase with voice loudness. S. Asadi et al., Scientific Reports. 9, 2348 (2019).

The Aerobiological Pathway for Transmission of Communicable Respiratory Disease. Roy C and Milton DK, New Engl J Med, 2004

Influenza Virus Copy Number In Aerosol Particles Exhaled By Patients With And Without Wearing Of An Ear-loop Surgical Mask. D. K. Milton, M. P. Fabian, B. J. Cowling, M. L. Grantham, J. J. McDevitt, PLoS Pathog. 9, e1003205 (2013).