



# Overview of Global Practice Report and MTA Pandemic Response Review

June 24, 2020



# Task Overview

- **Global Practices for Protecting Employee and Customer Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Global Practices Report)**
  - Based on a comprehensive, international review of practices that may be applicable to transit.
  - Identifies if practices are aligned with US Public Health Guidance and where further research is needed.
  - Identifies practices that may be considered by MTA and subject to a later due diligence review.
- **MTA COVID-19 Pandemic Response Review (Response Review)**
  - Summarizes MTA's policy-level responses to the COVID-19 pandemic to-date.
  - Identifies if practices are aligned with US Public Health Guidance and benchmarks practices against the APTA COVID-19 Guide.

# Overview of Global Practice Report

- Includes over 120 case studies (documented practices) sourced from literature review, direct interviews, and a review of international news media sources in over 30 countries.
- International case studies are curated and grouped in the following categories:
  - Screening/Testing/Contact Tracing
  - Physical Distancing
  - Indoor Air Quality
  - Cleaning and Disinfecting
  - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - Special Protocols for Vulnerable Populations
  - Internal and External Communications
  - Management Frameworks
- Case studies should not conflict with public health guidance, laws, and culture in New York to be considered for use by MTA.
- Many case studies can be immediately considered; others require further scientific research prior to consideration.

# Overview of MTA Pandemic Response Review

- The MTA Pandemic Response Review is substantially complete
- MTA's policy-level responses were reviewed via a survey instrument and also internal/external documents provided by MTA staff
- MTA's policy-level responses to the pandemic were:
  - Summarized in the eight categories described in the Global Practice Report
  - Checked for alignment with the US public health guidance that was available at the time, and in the context of a milestone timeline of the pandemic
  - Compared against the APTA COVID-19 Guide as a proxy benchmark for what other transit agencies are doing

# Overview of Review Findings

## Management Frameworks

- Survey Responses Provided to WSP: **11**
- Selected Findings To-Date: *MTA initiated its managerial response to the COVID-19 health emergency on 1/27/2020 and established an ongoing partnership with New York health authorities and academia to help determine the appropriate transit response.*

## Screening/Testing/Contact Tracing

- Survey Responses Provided to WSP: **29**
- Selected Findings To-Date: *MTA formalized an employee screening protocol on 3/24/2020. Priority viral testing was made available to employees at no cost on 4/15/2020. Contact tracing is managed by the health department.*

## Physical Distancing

- Survey Responses Provided to WSP: **28**
- Selected Findings To-Date: *MTA implemented a majority of the physical distancing measures in the APTA COVID-19 Guide prior to its publication on 4/13/2020; the remaining strategies were implemented later; a few strategies were not implemented due to tradeoffs and priorities.*

## Indoor Air Quality

- Survey Responses Provided to WSP: **5**
- Selected Findings To-Date: *MTA is beginning to explore risk mitigation strategies in this emerging area of research.*

# Overview of Review Findings

## Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Survey Responses Provided to WSP: 29
- Selected Findings To-Date: *MTA has continuously enhanced its cleaning and disinfection program since 3/3/2020. It is currently cleaning and disinfecting its fleet daily and frequent station touch points at least twice per day.*

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Survey Responses Provided to WSP: 22
- Selected Findings To-Date: *MTA began distributing PPE (including masks) to employees on 3/27/2020, prior to the CDC and WHO changing their guidance on mask usage by the general public.*

## Special Protocols for Vulnerable Populations

- Survey Responses Provided to WSP: 17
- Selected Findings To-Date: *MTA began instituting measures to reduce risk on Access-A-Ride on 3/12/2020. Special return to work policies for employees over 70 or with pre-existing medical conditions were issued on 4/14/2020.*

## Internal and External Communications

- Survey Responses Provided to WSP: 16
- Selected Findings To-Date: *MTA began systemwide public service announcements on 2/9/2020. Communications campaigns for new employee safety protocols were initiated on 3/14/2020.*

# Key Conclusions (thus far)

- The MTA took early, proactive, and decisive action to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 to employees and riders, with demonstrated action prior to the first case of COVID-19 being confirmed in New York.
  - MTA began distributing face masks to employees on March 27, 2020, prior to the CDC changing their position on mask usage by the general public.
  - MTA already implemented a majority of the practices in the APTA COVID-19 Guide prior to its publication on April 13, 2020.
- Thus far, MTA's policy-level responses to COVID-19 appear to be consistent with prevailing US public health guidance; the MTA Pandemic Response Review is still ongoing.

# Key Conclusions (thus far)

- The MTA can consider additional practices that may draw on input from emerging scientific research, the WSP Global Practice Report, MTA employees, riders, and ongoing partnerships with New York health officials.
- Some of the greatest reductions in COVID-19 risk can be attained by applying strategies that focus on the primary route of respiratory (droplet) transmission as part of broader response plans.
- Additional practices should be considered within the framework of the Hierarchy of Controls, and subject to a due diligence review before MTA considers implementing these practices.
- Thoughtful and sustained communications can educate and persuade employees and riders to successfully implement additional practices.