

VCHIP CHAMP VDH COVID-19

January 4, 2021 | 12:15-12:45pm Call Questions and Answers*

Wendy Davis, MD, FAAP, Vermont Child Health Improvement Program, UVM
Breena Holmes, MD, FAAP, Physician Advisor, Maternal & Child Health, Vermont Department of Health (VDH), VCHIP Senior Faculty

VDH Updates - Testing

Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: There is an ongoing desire on the part of the administration to have more testing access, especially in the event of a post-holiday surge.

VDH Updates - HAN on Vaccines

Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: We're getting a lot of public inquiries and calls to the school and childcare branch about that 1b vaccine category for teachers. Our response is that there have been no final decisions on the allocation and order in 1b. I expect those will be forthcoming. It's dependent on supply, so I'm hoping for an update on that shortly.

Summer Camps

Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: Longitudinal overnight camps, not just recreational day camps, play a huge part in many children's lives. The Vermont Camp Association has asked for my help. ACCD oversees the camp guidance, which is separate from school and childcare guidance. We may need advocacy surrounding how that rolls out in the community, including testing. That's also part of one of my national roles on the Council of School Health for the AAP.

Termination of Funding for Child Care Hubs

Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: I found out a little bit more from Holly Morehouse, VT Afterschool. They got \$50,000 from a Vermont Community Foundation and leveraged a different grant. All of which will still fall remarkably short of 84 HUBs for children willing to stand up care, but \$900,000 short right now. We may get some funding in 2021, but it's a rough couple of months having to be resourceful for something that's essential.

Questions/Discussion

Q: Dr. Holmes mentioned last week that same is being tracked, but Chris Finley mentioned on Wednesday that same is not federally required, is it possible for a vaccination tracking plan to be put into place prior to upcoming 2nd vaccines in order to catch this info?

A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: It's not exactly answering your question, but Chris did share with us that she wonders if when people aren't asked, it's because the information is already in our immunization registry. That part, I thought, was interesting, but in terms of a different way to track it, we can definitely bring that forth. I do know Vermont's committed to understanding that, so I appreciate you bringing it up.

Q: Speaking of vaccination, we made a list of employees with a priority list and we sent it in on Tuesday. We have only had ~ 5 out of 32 employees called/vaccinated and a few of these have been low on the list ahead of those higher on the list. One of our nurses was vaccinated with 2 teachers at the fairgrounds. Anyone else having similar experiences?

A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: Other community health care professionals had not been outreached because we've been asked not to push the system, but, everyone will get vaccinated.

Q: I've been messaging with director of Camp Downer. They are to be at 75% capacity, is that correct?

A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: This year is a little different, which is that we're getting some really nice guidance from Maine. There's a pediatrician consultant from Maine that, maybe you know in the immunization world, whose name is Laura Blaisdell, and she has a completely different way to describe a camp. You don't have to meet gathering numbers because it's its own sort of microcosm, the way they were able to do that in a college setting, so you don't have to speak to 75% capacity. What you speak to with the camp is are they adequately able to ventilate spaces and create the right physical environments to meet the needs when you're quarantining, but once a pod is altogether, and it can't, we're going to try to make the case that you don't have to count every head. Yes, the best messaging to camps currently is that we're actively working on it. We should be very solid by February on what the guardrails will be and if they're already enrolling that they'll have to make some calculus there because we don't have the facts.

Q: One of our nurses was vaccinated with a teacher from Baird. Our nurse said another teacher was also vaccinated, but not sure where she teaches.

A: Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP: I do wonder if their affiliation with Baird might have put them into a healthcare related category.

A: William Raszka, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: I have no idea why that happened. On 12/31 Walgreens had 50 doses of vaccine about to expire (in two hours) and gave that to UVMCH. UVMCH was very clear that only 1a would get those doses urgently (and did use all immediately).

A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: Teachers are not being vaccinated currently.

Q: Our nurse was vaccinated yesterday with the teachers. I am not saying that they should not be a priority; I just do not understand UVMCH's process at all. More the frustration is spending hours making a list and prioritizing our employees and it appears to not being followed at all. I get there will be hiccups.

A: Stephanie Winters, Vermont Medical Society: I would say the process is imperfect and messy and we will see things that we don't expect, but I don't think that means the entire process is messed up.

A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: I agree, this is the largest vaccination campaign, over the shortest period of time, in US history. There have been and will continue to be hiccups.

A: Michelle Shepard, MD, UVMCH Pediatric Primary Care & VCHIP: My partner was cold called from Northwestern Medical Center to get vaccinated. He's a mental health counselor not currently doing in-person visits. They were calling counselors based on psychology today. Sad thing was when he called back it was a nursing student who stated she was not getting the vaccine because she didn't think it was safe. He definitely is not 1A.

A: Alex Bannach, MD, North Country Pediatrics: Similar challenges in European countries, the logistics are just mind boggling.

A: Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP: We know some European countries, for example, are changing their plans for immediate allocation and administration of vaccine and certainly over the weekend I heard discussions about that among various talking heads but also federal representative. I would say those federally linked representatives, such as Doctor Fauci, that we heard from are certainly advocating, at least as of now, to stick to our current dosing intent to avoid making things even more messy and complicated.

*Note: This is a paraphrased synopsis of the call and is not a word-for-word transcription.

Q: Is there any room for advocacy re: prioritizing vaccination for teachers, child care workers, and other essential workers? I am concerned about the impact on educator wellbeing since the Governor's last announcement. Their wellbeing and morale directly impacts the wellbeing of our children and families.

A: Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP: Yes, some of us have been advocating for that, and we agree both about educator wellbeing and also the role that they play in the wellbeing of our children and families.

A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH I just want to acknowledge that Bill, Ben, Stephanie, Wendy and I spoke up that you all were amazing with the immunization implementation group that occurs on the 30th. There is a conflict with the group as it meets Fridays at noon and in general on Fridays and that's hard because we are manning this call. I don't think there's any more advocacy right this minute. Everyone that needs to know, the governor, the Secretary of Human Services, and our Commissioner, are well aware of the impact of that vaccine teachers could have on our education system and more importantly, on our students being able to be in person. It's a bit of a complex message just to share with all of you and that schools are safe, so if they're safe and the need to vaccinate seems less if we're making the case and have made the case about sort of a social, emotional health of the whole system. So right now the next thing you'll hear is a more specific description of the 1B group. It's not, fully clear when that will be, and as I said, it's a lot about the volume of vaccines and the supply we're able to get from the state, how big and deep 1B will be. I appreciate this group and being able to talk this all through because it's imperfect for sure.

A: William Raszka, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: There is very strong advocacy at the immunization committee level.

Q: This weekend at the Essex Fairgrounds (UVM MC site to vaccinate community healthcare professionals), the daily capacity was 250 people. Do you know if there are any plans to increase the capacity? The number I heard about number of vaccines in the state was 30,000 and about 10,000 had been administered.

A: Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP: Let me move to the briefing because we do have some numbers on that. As of Thursday, nearly 14,000 Vermonters had been vaccinated, actually, that was as of Wednesday night, and that was 21% of Phase 1A and 2% of those overall eligible population. Secretary Smith noted the vaccine dashboard now will, this week, be updated Tuesday and Friday and then next week, daily Monday through Friday. And here's the rub about our allocation and distribution. This week, the allocation has been cut by the feds to 3900 doses of Pfizer. They had been expecting 5800 doses and 3900 doses of Moderna and had gotten 4000 doses of that the previous week, so essentially expecting 11,000 doses and getting only 7800, and they are trying to do what they can to advocate with the feds to increase the allocation. But I suspect every state is doing that. As of Thursday, 21 of 37 skilled nursing facility folks had received their first dose and expecting all by January 8th to have gotten dose one and then the second dose by the end of January.

A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: Monica, sorry, but I do not have any information about plans for capacity at the fairgrounds. I can try to find out and let you know.

Q: When the numbers of vaccines in the state are mentioned, is that the number of actual doses so 30,000 would vaccinate 15,000 people or not?

A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: We will find that out.

Q: Thanks for info on Childcare Hubs, will all school after school programs be given that info re: funding?

A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: I found out a little bit more from Holly Morehouse with VT Afterschool that yes, thanks for pointing it out last week that the hub funding was closing out, in typical Vermont Afterschool fashion, they got \$50,000 from the Vermont Community Foundation. They were able to then leverage a different grant with Child Development Division and they also are trying to get some grants from the Department of Mental Health Building Flourishing Communities, all of which is still going to fall

all remarkably short of about 84 applications, 84 hubs, around the state that are willing to stand up care for children. They would need about \$900,000 and they have about \$110,000 right now, so depending on what comes through with relief this will be a very messy few months because we may get some funding in 2021 and that they could then rapidly use. So it's just a tough couple of months as always, having to be resourceful for something that's essential from our perspective.

C: William Raszka, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: There are very few indications for antibody testing for COVID-essentially on MIS-C.

C: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: Re antibody testing, few clinical indications. This should be distinguished from doing population-based testing for research/public health purposes.

Q: St. Albans Primary Care/Primary Care Health Partners (family medicine) has been ordering many tests (asymptomatic and symptomatic). Not sure what is happening in other family medicine/internal medicine practices but wanted you to know that we are doing this.

A: Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP: Thank you, very glad to hear that!