

VCHIP CHAMP VDH COVID-19

January 8, 2021 | 12:15-12:45pm Call Questions and Answers*

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VDH Updates – Cases in Schools

Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: I think it's safe to say that we had our brief reprieve, but yesterday in particular, we are back up in cases in Vermont and in multiple school districts. It's particularly concerning because many schools are fully remote this week. Next week will be busy. There's very strong energy from the Governor and the Commissioner that schools are going to be all in-person after April break. It's really about the safety of the schools, the low teacher surveillance percentage positive, and the changing weather. By April, we can have more windows open or have people outside.

Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP: That's great news, and we all will want to think about how we can support schools during that transition. We should stay aware of school recovery plans and provide support where we can be useful.

VT Vaccine Implementation Advisory Committee

Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP: The Vermont Vaccine Implementation Advisory Committee is meeting today. This group is advising the Department of Health, Agency of Human Services and the Governor in how vaccines are allocated and distributed. Dr. Holmes and I are both a part of that committee, along with Stephanie Winters, so there are numerous avenues to convey information from this group. Continued discussions with this group are exactly the kind of back-and-forth that we need for an integrated, respectful process during the distribution time.

Questions/Discussion

C: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: The Child Poverty Council is now called Advisory Council on Child Poverty and Strengthening Families (<https://legislature.vermont.gov/committee/detail/2018/45>).

Q: We, unfortunately, are hearing about vaccine doses being wasted, i.e., when scheduled patients/staff do not make their appointment. I strongly would like to encourage the committee to allow the use of unused expiring doses even on people that are not 1a but that are available within the very limited time before doses expire. It breaks my heart to know that doses are being wasted. Hospital administration might need clear communication about being allowed to do that.

A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: I will say anecdotally we are hearing this. It's a very interesting journey and I think everyone involved believes in not wasting vaccine doses. But I also know from rumor and public relations that when it's decided at the end of a day to reach out and try to get a few more people vaccinated not in 1a, it's brought forth a fair amount of discomfort from communities that are concerned about that. Mostly just not understanding, that it seems unfair. So I hear you that I would imagine it's on the minds of all hospitals as they set up these clinics and hope people show up.

A: Becca Bell, MD, UVM Medical Center: I saw a story about this yesterday in The Washington Post. I agree it's a problem. https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/trying-not-to-waste-a-single-drop-of-coronavirus-vaccine/2021/01/06/98aa661e-5023-11eb-bda4-615aaefd0555_story.html. And yes, there is a

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

difference between stories of extra doses and wasted doses. Lots of rumors, but I think they are finding people ultimately.

A: Lisa Gannon, MA, Primary Care Health Partners: Breaking news from NYT: Biden plans to release nearly all available vaccine doses to speed delivery. They were holding back supply to ensure timely second doses.

A: Keith Robinson, MD, UVMCH: Have you been encouraging practices to spread the dosing of the 2nd vaccine to prevent a reduction in workforce? If possible.

A: Ellen Gnaedinger, APRN, South Royalton Health Center: Perhaps a way to address having those outside group 1a receiving COVID vaccine is that this practice is consistent with the ethical principles of beneficence & utilitarianism.

A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: Other communities are doing that based on principal as accepting the reality of the next hour but then you have to be prepared as a hospital to hear the feedback and complaint that they think someone out of turn has been vaccinated so that takes courageous leadership. I'll see what we can do from the state side of that but it'll require a little bit of a nuance.

A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: I agree. We should figure out a way to make sure vaccines get into arms rather than let them go to waste. Everyone benefits the faster everyone gets vaccinated. Wasting doses is completely antithetical to this principle.

Q: Trey Dobson mentioned in his service area the ability to schedule vaccine administration for 1a group online. I think this approach would have been very helpful in the UVM MC service area. Wondering if that option will be available as other groups will be vaccinated.

A: Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP: Thanks for that reminder. Trey noted they were on the path for that anyway due to their testing system.

Q: Were you okay to drive after the 2nd dose?

A: I definitely have a very sore arm and I think that's pretty common even with the first dose. With the second dose it's even a little more painful, it's even a little hard to sleep. Otherwise, I think you can drive and I did a work out this morning and felt okay. I have some chills, some headache, and some myalgia.

Q: Do you know if the 3 days can be during their own time, i.e., not 8-5? (Re: temporary medical chart reviewers for CHAMP project from February through May/June 2021)

A: Chris Pellegrino, VCHIP: We are flexible with timing since it will be remote.

A: Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP: We normally like to have the reviewers work while the practices are open in case there are questions.

Q: What's the current recommendation for breast feeding mothers? Will they be vaccinated? Any risk to the nursing infant?

A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: The decision about pregnant women is a shared decision making model between patients and obstetrical providers, but the current recommendation about breastfeeding says it's okay. There is an ongoing study about the impact of vaccination on breastmilk and breastfeeding. Marj Meyer gave a great Grand Rounds before the holiday break around best guidance for pregnancy and breastfeeding.

A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: There are no data on this but as pregnant/lactating women were excluded from the study, but from a scientific standpoint I do not see any reason for concern for breastfeeding women. So I personally would encourage breastfeeding women to get vaccinated.

A: Michelle Shepard, MD, UVMCH Pediatric Primary Care & VCHIP: All non-live vaccines are fine in pregnancy and live vaccines given during breastfeeding. This should not be any different.

A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: I agree.

Q: Do you know if online scheduling for vaccine administration will be an option for the 75+, etc., groups?

A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: There is a lot of appropriate discussion about online vaccination registration for people of a certain age may be problematic. They've experienced that with the testing platform so I think there will be multiple ways for them to sign up.

Q: Cathedral Square is starting CVS vaccines on Jan 29, with sign-up in the office of the building (paper and pen).

A: Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP: The pharmacies are part of that federal partnership to give the vaccines at long-term care facilities, including CVS.

A: Jessica Denton, Community Health Team Social Worker: They have several buildings around Chittenden County.