

## VCHIP CHAMP VDH COVID-19

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### **COVID-19 Cases in VT K-12 Learning Communities (While Infectious)**

*Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH:* There are 356 cases representing 173 schools. For the denominator, there are 300+ public schools and a number of independent schools in Vermont, so under half of school have had at least one case. Within that construct, there have been 25 outbreaks since September. That term is inflammatory, so it's important to look at the CDC definition of an outbreak in a school. From where I sit, this is an extremely low number, but if you're the school that has the outbreak, it feels different. Epidemiology does the best they can to make the association, when there's transmission between two people, but nothing is absolute. When you talk to people, it's human behavior, but if it's likely transmission occurred in schools, then that's what the epidemiologist determines.

*Benjamin Lee, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics:* I agree, the messaging is challenging. Quick back-of-envelope calculation using the numbers you presented earlier suggests 6-7% of VT schools have had an outbreak, which is consistent with our predictions that outbreaks would occasionally occur but would be an exception not the norm.

### **Questions/Discussion**

**Q: Are the rules different for private schools and public schools in terms of social distancing, etc.?**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH:* No, independent schools have all followed the safe and healthy start guidance.

**Q: Of the 17%, how many are adult to adult, adult to kid, kid to kid, etc.?**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH:* Exactly, so that was our next data request. I did want you guys to know that as your school and childcare colleague's branch of the health operations, we ask for detailed data every day and the data team says, OK, will get it in the queue. They have tons and tons of analysis then requests. So when we saw this yesterday we asked for that number. General back of the envelope, is it 50/50 students and staff. But I'd like them to break that down by age, because first I was a bit surprised by that, so I'm waiting to see that confirmed. But in my anecdotal but pretty deep analysis of the school cases in elementary school, it's almost all adults, so I'll see what I can find out for this group in the weeks to come.

*A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics:* 17% of cases as a result of in-school transmission does sound a bit higher than I would have initially predicted but not significantly so.

**Q: If an asymptomatic close contact from school becomes positive, would the other close contacts have to quarantine for 7 additional days, or because they were not together 2 days before the new positive, they would not be considered close contact to the new positive?**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH:* So, we could take this one offline, but I'll suffice it to say that each new positive has to be treated separately so you get the positive result and you think about where was that student and you go two days back for identifying potential infectious spread on that, so that would if

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

*you're going 2 days before this person tells positive, then it sounds like they've been quarantining. If you have a new positive, you go back two days on that human's life. You don't just let that be.*

*A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: I THINK they would be okay since last contact was more than 2 days prior to the positive test, but I would think specific guidance if any of the tests come up positive would be given by the epi/contact tracing team.*

**Q: Do you know what time the online registration opens on Monday? I plan to help my parents and mother-in-law register.**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: I do not know. I will find out! Our vaccine communication person, Heidi, said it is to be determined.*

*A: Ann Wittpenn, MD, UVMCH Pediatric Primary Care: They did not make the time public, but did say no need to stay up until midnight for a 12:01am start.*

*A: Halle Davis: I thought he said the time would be announced thru media and social platforms?*

*A: Ann Wittpenn, MD, UVMCH Pediatric Primary Care: Yes, I believe Monday morning it will be announced. It seemed to me they are trying to message patients and that there will be slots for all.*

**Q: I am hearing that some school staff that have close face to face contact with older students are getting scheduled for vaccines, SLPs, guidance counselors, etc.?**

*A: Alex Bannach, MD, North Country Pediatrics: I believe that they get the vaccine because they qualify as "health care providers", rather than educational staff.*

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: I can address this. There's a list of professionals that work in schools that were deemed to be 1A and given to the hospitals back at the beginning of this for the outreach. And it's a pretty good list of people that work in community settings, including schools that have direct contact. The problem is it wasn't perfect, like a lot of things with the vaccine. I guess the glaring omission was behavioral intervention people who do a lot of work with children with developmental disabilities. This is where they landed (see list below) and that was the extent of it, so it's not an ongoing list where they're continuing to add. **List:** Athletic Trainers, Dental Hygienist, Licensed Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors, Mental Health Counselor, Occupational Therapists, Physician, Physician Assistant, Psychoanalyst, Psychologists, Psychotherapists, PT, PT Assistant, Nurses, including health office assistants, Social Worker, Speech Pathology*