

## VCHIP CHAMP VDH COVID-19

December 7, 2020 | 12:15-12:45pm Call Questions and Answers\*

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

### **VDH Updates: Recent Outbreaks**

*Brenea Holmes, MD, VCHIP & VDH:* I continue to be a little bummed on the school calls that the adult folks identified as close contacts are having difficulty getting tested through primary care. That's been driving use of on-demand sites for mildly symptomatic people, which is allowable but not preferable. If you have examples of people in your area who haven't figured out the pathway to testing, I'd like to do some individual outreach because it's problematic in the school setting when teachers can't get tested.

*Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP:* We will continue to support folks who want to stand up testing in their offices. We can help clarify processes and procedures and provide some limited technical assistance when needed.

### **VT Pediatricians Respond to COVID-19**

*Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP:* Dr. Erica Gibson called our attention to some wonderful photographs that were posted by Orchard School on Instagram about the visit with Drs. Lee and Raszka, so we'd love to hear how that went if one of you would like to share.

*Bill Raszka, MD, UVMCH & LCOM:* Orchard School is doing a great job. I was really impressed with the school nurses who had set up a great spot for the students. We did see areas for potential improvements. It was interesting looking at the buses themselves. There are issues with the windows being closed and not much ventilation. There's a lot of concern about fomite transmission. To be respectful, there is a tremendous administrative burden being placed on teachers. I was so impressed by what has been accomplished at that school.

### **Practice Issues: VDH Program Immunization Update – Christine Finley, VDH Immunization Program Manager**

*Christine Finley, VDH:* I'm really delighted to have a chance to reach out to providers. The big change in the ACIP guidelines was the moving of residents of long term care facilities into phase 1A. I'll talk about what that impacted for our program. They have a pretty broad definition of health care personnel as paid and unpaid persons who work in health care settings and have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients and infectious materials.

### **Questions/Discussion**

#### **Q: Could you tell us how to get our email on your list?**

*A: Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP:* Please email [vchip.champ@med.uvm.edu](mailto:vchip.champ@med.uvm.edu) with your request.

*A: Miki Beach, VCHIP:* Anyone who received emails from the VCHIP.CHAMP mailbox for this call will be imported over when we create the listserv, and if you don't receive the emails, please let us know.

*A: Shannon Hogan, DO, UVM Medical Center Pediatric Primary Care, Burlington:* Check your junk mail box, as my emails have been going there lately.

**Q: Will HCP be tiered, like inpatient first, etc.?**

*A: Christine Finley, VDH: As Dr. Chen put it, those are in priority there but not tiering just inpatient because we have 38 home care patients who have COVID who are being cared so it's those with the direct contacts but not just in patient but when I talk about how we're vaccinating, you'll be able to see that.*

**Q: Do we know yet how the state will be prioritizing immunocompromised individuals and/or those on immunosuppressive medications?**

*A: Merideth Plumpton, RN, VDH: ACIP is making recommendations on each phase. No vote yet on immunocompromised.*

**Q: Some VT physicians who will be getting a vaccine soon are wondering about social media promotion. I know there are many hashtags floating around for HCW to post with pictures of themselves getting the vaccine. It sounds like the most popular hashtag will be #ThisIsOurShot. Does VDH have a particular hashtag they are promoting? Those getting the vaccine first want to promote and normalize.**

*A: Merideth Plumpton, RN, VDH: VDH communications is working on social media posts. That is an excellent idea that I will pass along.*

*A: Christine Finley, VDH: Oh, I love that. I don't think we have a #, but I'll check with Jillian and Shari but that's a fantastic idea. What do you guys want? You guys let us know.*

**Q: Are teachers 1b?**

*A: Elizabeth Hunt, MD, Timber Lane Pediatrics: 1b said "education" as an essential type of worker.*

*A: Merideth Plumpton, RN, VDH: ACIP is looking at each Phase and determining which populations will be included in each phase. There was some talk about teachers being part of phase 1b. They have not voted on that yet.*

*A: Stephanie Winters, Vermont Medical Society: VT is able to prioritize as it sees fit, though mostly following ACIP....Teachers are at the top of 1b (essential workers).*

**Q: Stephanie, what is the definition of teacher? I think the child care providers are defined as essential and I would put them high on the list.**

*A: Stephanie Winters, Vermont Medical Society: It actually states education sector, let me clarify.*

*A: Christine Finley, VDH: So, childcare providers in my understanding would be absolutely part of an essential population and there's going to be a lot more coming on that. I think one of the things they looked at were the number of essential workers in the US and it was around 80 million which is a very large group and they are trying to figure out that piece.*

**Q: If 2 doses are required, will we be allocating 50% for boosting the first group in case there is delay/interruption in getting more? (Out-patient practice)**

*A: Merideth Plumpton, RN, VDH: When we place a vaccine order, CDC automatically puts the second dose aside for us.*

**C: The New York Times article, "Who Will Get the Coronavirus Vaccine First?"**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/01/health/covid-vaccine-distribution-first.html>

**Q: How do you condition a Pfizer vaccine when the temperature is so cold?**

*A: Merideth Plumpton, RN, VDH: Pfizer is a frozen powder and you mix it with a diluent. Moderna is a frozen liquid and will need to be thawed before administration.*

**Q: Is the Pfizer vaccine similar to MMR and Varicella?**

*A: Merideth Plumpton, RN, VDH: Yes.*

**Q: Can you clarify about mandating vaccines? A legislator was asking, so just trying to clarify. I am NOT looking at pushing a mandate, FYI. I know that you said because EU it can't be mandated, but is that federal only? Example, can states mandate, can employers mandate?**

*A: Merideth Plumpton, RN, VDH: I will leave this question to Chris. There have been no conversations about mandating the vaccine at a state level. I am not sure about employers.*

*A: Christine Finley, VDH: My understanding is if you've got a vaccine approved under an emergency use authorization and you don't have the standard follow up time or the other point that they can't mandate, but this is a persistent question that's coming up so I'm sure we'll get more guidance, but on either a CDC or Operation Warp Speed call that was addressed and I felt pretty confident that it can't be mandated. But I never say can't. That was my understanding.*

**Q: V-safe app is not available in the app store yet, but multiple others with the same name. It might be worthwhile clarifying once released.**

*C: Merideth Plumpton, RN, VDH: V-safe also gives second dose reminders.*

**Q: Will everyone be using V-safe? I think everyone should! We need to emphasize that we still focus on safety.**

*A: Merideth Plumpton, RN, VDH: I absolutely agree.*

*A: Christine Finley, VDH: My understanding is initially when the CDC launched it, they said it was for health care workers and then in the most recent presentations that we've had on it, it has broadened much more.*

**Q: How long is a thawed dose viable?**

*A: Merideth Plumpton, RN, VDH: It's different for each vaccine. Once a vial is punctured, the vaccine has to be used in 6 hours. Each vaccine will come with specific administration instructions.*

**C: Maybe nothing new for folks, but interesting episode of On the Media this weekend:**

<https://www.npr.org/podcasts/452538775/on-the-media> "A Dose Of Reality with the pandemic's second wave in full-swing, two vaccine makers are seeking emergency use authorization from the FDA. This week, On The Media explores how to convince enough Americans to take a coronavirus vaccine so that the country can reach herd immunity."

**Q: Do we know what will happen with the mRNA in our bodies in the long term? Is it supposed to be destroyed?**

*A: William Raszka, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: mRNA should not persist.*

*A: Alex Bannach, MD, North Country Pediatrics: Had parent asked last week, but didn't have time to research this weekend...timeframe? Any idea?*

*A: William Raszka, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: Very quickly.*

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/mrna-vaccine-basics.html#:~:text=mRNA%20vaccines%20do%20not%20contain,interact%20with%20a%20person's%20DNA.>

**Q: Atul Gawande in New Yorker this weekend.**

*A: Miki Beach, VCHIP: Is this it? <https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-new-yorker-interview/atul-gawande-on-coronavirus-vaccines-and-prospects-for-ending-the-pandemic>*