

VCHIP CHAMP VDH COVID-19

December 18, 2020 | 12:15-12:45pm Call Questions and Answers*

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VDH Updates - Schools

Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP & VDH: Our work together as community and state folks is never done. After January 1st, we will need to get back at this, because these decisions have not been public health driven. These were staffing and educational decisions that, from my perch, are not great for kids. So I think whatever is going on in your community, it would be helpful if you could dig in a bit and let us know whatever is going on in your community. This information is not available anywhere as a repository. I would like to reinforce how safe our schools are and how important it is to for schools to be in-person.

Questions/Discussion

Q: Anyone else having difficulty logging into the VDH PPE website? We can't log in any longer, <https://gs-sftp.ahs.state.vt.us/EFTClient/Account/Login.htm>.

A: Sharonlee Trefry, RN, VDH: Are you asking about the PPE request form? The form just opened for me. It's probably bandwidth on the forms link when multiple folks are entering simultaneously.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=0500IK26PEOcAnDtzHVZxnYHsES1qh9Hs2EGYmwC2tBURDVPSDJS1hUTzdJMFixVDZHQ1JHS1cxViQIQCN0PWcu>.

Q: What is the rationale for delayed opening?

A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP & VDH: There is a lot of pressure on school leaders and sometimes people just make these decisions and sometimes it's a bit of "what if": what if folks gather at Christmas, what if folks gather for New Years. Let's give it a little more time to see what happens. It's all rather anecdotal. It's not driven by work shortages as we don't know what those shortages are yet. These anticipatory circumstances are of concern.

Q: What are you hearing about schools handling the return to school in the New Year?

A: Monica Fiorenza, MD, Timber Lane Pediatrics (South): Christ the King in Burlington will be remote from Jan 4-8. I know Mater Christi was planning to do that also earlier in the fall. I don't know if that has changed.

A: Heather Lesage-Horton, MD, Brattleboro Primary Care: Hilltop Montessori is extending break by 1 week (partially related to possible travel but also for HVAC upgrades).

A: Jeri Wohlberg, FNP, Hardwick Area Health Center: Orleans South closed for 10 days after Thanksgiving to avoid infections fueled by Thanksgiving Day. As of now, they are planning to open after Christmas but I am suspicious it will change.

A: Kate Goodwin, RN, CPNP, Lakeside Pediatrics: Schoolhouse (South Burlington) is virtual Jan 4-8. They are concerned about families maybe traveling during the holidays, and teachers "needing a break." As far as I know right now, SB public schools are opening for business as usual on Jan 4. Interestingly the preschool at Schoolhouse is opening as usual on Jan 4.

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

A: Elizabeth Wirth, School Nurse, U-32 School: Washington Central is not changing our schedule at all, however, we do worry about staff still quarantining and not being available to come back. But if we extended the break, it seemed that would be giving permission to travel.

A: Colleen Moran, MD, Appleseed Pediatrics: Some schools are surveying and if a certain percent of staff/students will still need to be in quarantine, they are electing to be remote.

A: Susan Sykas DNP, Appleseed Pediatrics: Or, do they know their staff is travelling!

A: Suzanne Picard, CNC, CVMC: I think Washington Central is doing a great job with everything.

Q: As a parent, I do appreciate a bit of a heads up for the kids being virtual though. It's much harder when they make the choice to change things last minute.

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP & VDH: I hear you. I did not mean to be disparaging of school planning. I just think it's a strange public health or non-public health thought that in the setting that people may violate the "please don't gather or travel order", we're setting up schools differently in the event for those people who don't abide. The kids that suffer most are the kids without resources and who don't have a lot of choices for their care. I'm stuck on the anticipating that people **might** travel and I don't want them to travel.*

A: Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP: I do think that's a message that's being repeated over and over, which it likely needs to be, in the media briefings and the news, in other social media platforms, to help keep spread the word.

A: Sharonlee Trefry, RN, VDH: Regular calls asking about specific exemptions for travel or gathering, e.g., person living alone to join immediate family requires quarantine for the traveler/visitor.

Q: Test result times are varying widely. Do we know why? I tested a patient in our office on Monday afternoon and we're still waiting for results. Ours are picked up by courier at 5 PM and I believe they go to UVM lab.

A: Monica Fiorenza, MD, Timber Lane Pediatrics (South): I've had results returned for patients in 12 hours! Our courier brings the specimens to UVM.

A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP & VDH: I'm super curious about these pathways because I know the most about the CIC sites. Those are very quick. Those are the ones promising a three-day turnaround and those results go right to Broad and come right back. It's pretty efficient. In terms of pathways, I'm curious about courier: when it was picked up, did it go to UVMMC, did it go to the Public Health lab. Details matter because there seems to be fits and starts on where the glitches exist. I will note in this system, but if you're using any other platforms besides going through you UVM or the Health Department, I really can't speak to the turnaround time because those have their own backlogs, including the Mayo.

Q: With regards to the CIC results not going to the PCPs, can the VDH contact tracers ask the positive people who they are talking to ask about or get permission to contact their PCP? All of the negative results from the CIC site would not be very helpful, but the positives definitely would be.

A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP & VDH: I hear that. We talked about this during the Vermont Medical Society call yesterday, too. So, Dr. Levine and I really want the CIC side to be able to add a field that says "who's your primary care". So at least it's somewhere if there's capacity and bandwidth for someone to use that information. But I'm getting a fair amount of pushback this morning about how would this look? The contact tracers have a very specific job and if they get permission to talk to primary care then that implies that you would like, as a provider, the contact tracers to alert you and they don't really have the capacity to have those conversations. So we're trying to create a systematic approach to this connection without it being another big task on an already overburdened system. Ideas are welcome here, because it's one of my

important roles in the health operations to be the primary care liaison, and it needs a systematic approach, not relying on the humans that already have too much to do.

A: Sharonlee Trefry, RN, VDH: Hearing on calls about school personnel checking with their child care provider, if it is "OK" to get surveillance testing, implying that the CC provider will exclude if waiting for a surveillance test. No data on that issue and will continue trying to resolve.

Q: Do we know if the COVID Vaccine Webinar will be recorded in case we can't attend at noon?

A: Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP: Yes, they're always recorded. We'll make sure that link to the page is also in the email tonight and they also post the slides. They really do a great job of easy access to follow up for folks who can't attend in real time.

Q: In the email last night from Isabelle Dejardins, it stated that community providers who have hospital privileges at UVM can be vaccinated at UVM, but not our staff. It was mentioned there is a different system for other community health care providers in the UVM area. Any additional information about how UVM will be communicating with us?

A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVM Children's Hospital & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: Good question. Unfortunately, I don't have any additional information either.

A: Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP: I don't immediately have that information nor am I exactly aware of what that other system is. Breena, do you know anything about that? I'm making a note of that.

A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP & VDH: We talked about this on a few calls this morning. Folks, we really need hospital leadership to understand the broad array of a community's health care workers because they are "responsible" for immunizing everyone, and that includes school nurses. So Sharonlee and I've been talking with our district offices. School nurses need to be included in these lists. They are healthcare professionals, of course, and that's true of your staff as well. So, I'm curious about this and I think Dr. Davis will get to the bottom of it. We need possible leadership here.

A: Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP: What I would love is if anybody has heard anything proactively from your hospital about this, if you would send that either to me at wendy.davis@med.uvm.edu or to the CHAMP mailbox, VCHIP.CHAMP@med.uvm.edu, we will assemble those responses.