

## VCHIP CHAMP VDH COVID-19

February 12, 2021 | 12:15-12:45pm Call Questions and Answers\*

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### COVID-19 and Schools

*Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH:* The number of cases we have in schools is sort of stable. Continuing to reduce community spread will help keep rates low in schools. It's not as good as it was in the fall, but it's okay and not getting worse. Also, on the school front, we're editing the release regarding music in schools to align the Agency of Education and VDH guidance. The guidance includes band and chorus.

### Post-vaccine Quarantine Requirements

*Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH:* If you've been vaccinated, and you are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, you do not have to quarantine. If you've been vaccinated and you travel, you still have to quarantine. The Governor wants other states to get on board before relaxing the quarantine guidelines.

### Questions/Discussion

**C: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH:** *Situational awareness led to our correcting an error in the data on Wednesday. It's a good reminder why this call is so important. It just felt odd that there were that many cases in the zero to 9 age group, so I called the data team and they said, oh gosh, you're right, they looked into it and it was an error. So, it's quality improvement at its best and if we weren't looking together, we wouldn't have known to do that, and it may have taken a while before they figured it out.*

**Q: Breastmilk/COVID-19 vaccine question:** I will check in with some OB's, but is anyone else hearing about significantly decreased milk supply on the side where vaccine was given? Just heard about this anecdotally from one colleague.

*A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: I have not heard that.*

*A: Leah Flore, FNP, Shelburne Pediatrics: I have not heard about breast milk reduction however on breast imaging they do see swelling in the lymph nodes on the site the injection was given so guessing this is the reason. Don't stop breastfeeding.*

*A: Alicia Jean Veit, MD, Timber Lane Pediatrics: I am involved in a vaccination/lactation study and they asked the question about whether I noticed a decreased volume.*

*A: Melissa Kaufold, RN, UVM Health Network Home Health & Hospice: This was news to me. So interesting to hear about the question.*

**Q: Regarding athletes post COVID-19 infection:** Are all pediatricians aware of the VDH and AAP guidance that athletes regardless of symptom severity MAY NOT return to play until asymptomatic for at least 14 days? I am also curious about the reason. Are athletes still potentially contagious or is it cardio-protective? Can an athlete attend games to support his/her team after isolation ends before being cleared to play?

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH:* Yes, we've talked about this on this call. This is cardio-protective and concerned about potential cardiomyopathy post-COVID. The recommendation is that they need clearance from PCP, not a cardiologist. Kristen Connolly, MD, just before this call, sent us the final protocols. It's a statewide algorithm for the clearance. If they are no longer contagious, they follow the same return to the school protocol as other people and can therefore attend games to support the team.

*A: Greg Connolly, MD, Lakeside Pediatrics: Kristen Connolly and Jonathan Flyer will be coming out with a protocol this week.*

**Q: New Hampshire has PCPs send in form verifying that patient has co-morbidities. Some lag as emails must match & their fax was overwhelmed initially.**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: OK, that's good to know. It's a major debate. I was at the chronic condition group to try to figure out how to keep this simple, but also not overburden the system. The heart disease conversation was fascinating. As you may know, it's very clear which heart diseases have higher risk for COVID-19 and it certainly is not arrhythmia that we talked about, that how would you, if you have SVT as an example, or atrial fibrillation, do you consider yourself a person with heart disease, which is where the self-attestation could get interesting.*

**Q: The updated music guidance did not include chorus/singing. Was there a reason for this? I did not hear it mentioned during Dr. French's prepared remarks.**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: I just reviewed the draft and singing is definitely allowed and included.*

*A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: Singing is included as well. He may have just refereed to it as music, but broadly speaking singing is considered part of the music category.*

*A: Melissa Kaufold, RN, UVM Health Network Home Health & Hospice: Singing guidance was specifically clarified during Q&A.*

**Q: Could transient loss of smell/taste be a side effect of surgery?**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: The laboratory scientists that advise us were quick to point out that we don't have a ton of data, but reminded us the PCR tests are highly sensitive.*

*A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: The sensitivity of PCR tests is good, so false negatives are rare, but still occur. It's a little bit tricky because you know the duration of loss of taste or smell is short. Usually what we've been seeing is in patients with COVID-19 it's a longer course of anosmia or loss of taste. So that's the thing that's a little bit difficult, but in my mind, during the winter of 2021, acute loss of taste or smell is COVID-19 related, and in that context, you know I would worry about a false negative test in this clinical scenario. So, somebody with acute loss of taste or smell 2-3 days following a social gathering would be concerning for COVID-19. Maybe that is a little bit overcautious and there are other reasons that somebody could have it. However, I feel we've been more conservative for less when it comes to this type of case presentation. That's just my standpoint.*

**Q: Is the 3 month time frame after vaccine because that is how much data we have on these vaccines, or because there is some evidence of the vaccine effect decreasing in that window? I had a parent who told me the vaccine only worked for 3 months, and I am not sure if this messaging is feeding into that perception.**

*A: Melissa Kaufold, RN, UVM Health Network Home Health & Hospice: Mark Levine was answering question re: 90 days during Q&A. Abundance of caution until further data confirming current vaccine coverage for additional strains.*