

VCHIP CHAMP VDH COVID-19

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

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

Practice Issues: Promoting Helmet Use in Children, Jessica VanNostrand, MD, and Abby Beerman, MPH

Jessica VanNostrand, MD, UVMCH Resident: Bike accidents account for a large number of injuries in kids in emergency departments. A large percentage of morbidity and mortality are related to traumatic brain injuries (TBIs). According to the CDC, about 60% of kids ride a bike at some point, about 50% of those always wear a helmet, and 30% never wear a helmet. Pie chart from YRBS middle schooler data in Vermont. 91% of middle schoolers in Vermont report that they ride bikes. We need to get our helmet use up because there are a lot of bike accidents in Vermont every year. If parent or caregiver does not wear a helmet, kids are at a higher risk of not wearing a helmet. Families of low socioeconomic status or BIPOC families less likely to wear a helmet. In households where parents or caregivers always wear a helmet when riding a bike, 90% of kids in those households always wear a helmet when riding a bike.

Abby Beerman, MPH, UVMCH Injury Prevention Coordinator: The Protect your Head at All Times (PHAT) program at UVMCH started new initiatives, including providing helmets to partner sites for distribution to children and families. Please complete survey at <https://redcap.med.uvm.edu/surveys/?s=KR3CLDAJFP>

Questions/Discussion

C: Nathaniel Waite, RN, VDH: Spring COVID-19 safety messaging toolkit for schools to share with families:

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/SpringSchoolsMessagingToolkit.pdf>

Q: Why do they (high schoolers) not have to wait for results before returning to school?

A: Susan Sykas DNP, Appleseed Pediatrics: Good question.

A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: It is clear this is being driven by high schoolers.

C: Jessica VanNostrand: Survey link for participants:

<https://redcap.med.uvm.edu/surveys/?s=KR3CLDAJFP>. **Most applicable for PCPs, but everyone is encouraged to complete the information relevant to them. It should only take one minute, maybe two if you are a detailed person. We would appreciate anyone willing to fill it out.**

C: Nathaniel Waite, RN, VDH: It would be great if you were to share any info about your work with sally.kerschner@vermont.gov. Sally is our injury prevention PH Nurse in MCH at the Health Dept. and could also share with our other injury prevention colleagues at VDH.

C: Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP: Thanks, Nate - we (VCHIP) can help facilitate that connection.

C: Alex Bannach, MD, North Country Pediatrics: That sounds like an amazing program! Sending you an email now!

C: Stan Weinberger, MD, UVMCH Pediatric Primary Care: Yes, amazing program!

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

Q: When I lived in Seattle, the children's hospital collaborated with Kohl's Cares to provide bike and ski/snowboard helmets to all kids at no cost. I fear that the 10 dollars is cost prohibitive. Any thoughts about partners to get helmets free to families?

A: Abby Beerman, MPH, UVMCH Injury Prevention Coordinator: We used to work with Kohl's Cares and partners in the past. We found there is now a lack of funding for no-cost helmets, so we did try to seek out the most accessible model. Some partners can apply for mini grants, but as a state body we are not able to provide the funding directly. We encourage providers to partner locally.

Q: I've run into some issues related to finance department concerns - any thoughts on supporting them regarding workflows for collecting and sending along payments for helmets? Is there someone they can reach out to at UVMCH?

Q: Any thoughts about the South Burlington School District email last week that went from saying "yes" to full-time school on 4/2 to now, "not likely" based on 4/9 email?

A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: I will need to look. My recollection was that there was never a plan to go full-time in middle and high schoolers for South Burlington. The updates that David Young gave indicated that they were shooting for full-time for elementary school by early May, with a plan to introduce Wed learning on an alternating schedule for MS-HS. His most recent update indicates that no changes were planned for the older kids, and still not finalized for the younger. Not sure that anything has changed. The original email mentioned K-8, but the most recent said the plan was originally for MS-HS, so a bit unclear. I was not involved in these discussions with the district so have no further insight.

Q: Has there been any discussion or planning of earlier distribution of Pfizer vaccine to pediatric offices now that they have filed for EUA for children 12+?

A: William Raszka, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: We cannot use the vaccine in teens until EUA has been given. Whether and when the vaccine will be distributed to pediatric offices is still an ongoing discussion. The vaccine needs a depot system. It is not easy to deliver in an office, one by one. Chris Finley will be looking at this,

A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: I must reiterate, distributing mRNA vaccines to PCP offices will be very, very challenging and it is not clear to me if/when this will occur.

Q: With the VT reopening plan, it states by July 4th, masks and distancing will be "encouraged". Do you anticipate masks will go away in schools and camps before kids are vaccinated?

A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: I would not at all be in favor of masks going away in schools and camps.

A: William Raszka, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: There are so many mixed messages. We can travel without quarantine, congregate on North Beach, go to restaurants, and even skip masks, but still cannot get kids into schools in-person. My goodness.

A: Ellen Gnaedinger, APRN, South Royalton Health Center: I agree we need to hold the course with mask wearing, at least until most of 16-year-olds & older are vaccinated; the next 2-3 months & maybe by then we will know more about the timing of vaccinating 12+.

Q: Seems we only know that vaccine lessens risk, and I have not seen data that indicates masks can be discarded... when they test effectiveness of the vaccines, was it only with people not wearing masks? Or were they wearing masks? Does anyone know?

A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: To be clear, I think masks will still be promoted as strongly recommended. What is on the policy planning for summer is removing the mask mandate?

A: William Raszka, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: The vaccine trials were conducted under natural conditions. Some wore masks and other did not. Presumably, equal numbers of mask wearers (or not) were in both arms.

A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVMCH & Larner COM Dept. of Pediatrics: Outcomes in clinical trials would not have considered mask use. The data indicate that asymptomatic infection following vaccination is rare, and that viral loads in people who do get asymptotically infected is low, indicated low risk of transmission. However, if children are not yet vaccinated, those rules do not apply. While it does continue to be clear that young children are less likely to transmit compared to older children and adults, personally I do not feel the risk is low enough to justify saying they can be in school or camp without masks or treating them as if they were the same as immunized adults.