

## VCHIP CHAMP VDH COVID-19

July 14, 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

### **COVID-19 Pediatric Cases**

*Dr. Wendy Davis:* These are essentially the same statistics that were being followed as what we formerly showed you as the school-aged children case report. Now, we received clarification that the age groupings for the summer incorporate all children, so not separating out the college attendees. They do now separate these out by age group with a rate per 10,000 individuals in Vermont. Their data is also always preliminary and subject to change.

*Dr. Breena Holmes:* There's a little uptick happening in the 0 to 5 age group. It's obviously small numbers. It is the group that's unvaccinated, and they're gathering. This is a group taking advantage of wonderful summer opportunities and camps. They attended 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations and activities. I'm glad they're doing the data this way because it's exactly what we need to determine the summer situation as it relates to COVID and children.

### **Practice Issues: Updated CDC School Guidance**

*Dr. Breena Holmes:* This was the CDC getting out ahead. It's pretty good from a planning perspective to start thinking about fall return to school in July. In that spirit, Ilisa Stalberg, MCH Director, asked Drs. Bill Raszka and Ben Lee to meet with the Health Commissioner and the Secretary of Education. It was supposed to be in August, and they moved it up to next week. They're going to begin the conversation. We're going to prep that tomorrow with AAP leadership to think about from the pediatric health care perspective and the pediatric infectious disease perspective what it might look like. Ilisa will then bring those recommendations to the political arena of our Governor and the administration. I really don't know where we're headed here. I think there will be some pretty good lobbying or advocacy from pediatrics that unvaccinated people need masks indoors. I don't know that we're going to land in any mandate situation. Because we're talking about it so much, I just have to emphasize this stay home when you're sick thing is paramount in life and also in COVID. It's going to hit squarely on working parents. Last year we were able to bump along with our terrible social policies where people don't have sick leave and they can't care for their children when their children are sick. We bumped along because there was COVID and some flexibility in the way people were working. When that starts to go away, we have some work to do as a state and a society about the public policies that support people staying home when they're sick. I say this in several meetings. I just want to keep saying it until we build a will and a team that starts to really do this. The stress that will amplify as this happens needs to be addressed. We can't go to work when we're sick, nor can children go to school or child care. It puts enormous stress on families, and I'd like to fix it.

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

## Questions/Discussion

**Q: Can you comment on Vermont Department of Health's guidance for adolescents 12-18yo who want the COVID vaccine (or other vaccines) but whose parents do not consent?**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP (verbally): This has come up anecdotally. I do not think there is any pathway. There is no statute on immunization for minors to my knowledge. It has come up as a concern and a problem but without a solution.*

*A: Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP (verbally): The only pathway may be of those who are formally legally emancipated minors. The other statutes may relate to other health issues and health care delivery.*

*A: Stephanie Winters, Vermont Medical Society: Unfortunately, at this time, children of that age bracket currently need parental consent. Unless as Wendy noted, emancipated.*

**Q: I plan to reach out to NeoMed, but with the rise of cold viruses with removal of mask mandates and RSV (in southern parts of the country seeing rise out of typical season) is there discussion of offering Synagis to our high risk patients at an alternative schedule than typical of "Turkey's to Tulips"?**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP (verbally): Becca Bell has told Wendy, I, and others that that RSV is here. It has arrived in her clinical experience.*

*A: Becca (Rebecca) Bell, MD, UVM Medical Center: Hi Colleen, good thought. I will ask as well. We have had RSV admissions to the PICU this week.*

*A: Colleen Moran, MD, Appleseed Pediatrics: Oh, it is here! Good to know.*

**Re: Stephanie Winters, Vermont Medical Society: As a side note, Green Mountain Care Board Job Posting Now Available** – Clinicians Encouraged to Apply The job posting for an upcoming vacancy on the Green Mountain Care Board (GMCB) is now live and is available here -

<https://careers.vermont.gov/job/Montpelier-Green-Mountain-Care-Board-Member-VT-05601/765333900/>. The vacancy will begin in September, as member Maureen Usifer is not seeking reappointment. The GMCB oversees and evaluates the development, implementation, and effectiveness of health care payment and delivery system reforms designed to control the rate of growth in health care costs and maintain health care quality and access in Vermont. The Vermont Medical Society strongly supports a clinician serving on the GMCB and encourages any interested health care professional to apply. The Governor makes appointments to the GMCB from a list of qualified candidates submitted to him by the GMCB Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee consists of nine members, appointed by the Speaker of the House, Senate President Pro Tempore, Committee on Committees, and Governor.

**Q: I know it is only mid-July, but are thoughts on fall sports (masking vs not esp. for kids <12y)?**

*A: Shannon Hogan, DO, UVM Medical Center, Pediatric Primary Care (Burlington): Colleen, outdoor sports are already happening this summer without masks.*

**Re: staying home when sick**

*C: Shannon Hogan, DO, UVM Medical Center, Pediatric Primary Care (Burlington): Breena, I completely agree that staying home when sick requires a safety net. You are correct that our systems need to change!*

*C: Alicia Jean Veit, MD, Timber Lane Pediatrics: From a pediatrics standpoint of stay home when you are sick, one thing I am curious about is how long I need to keep a kid out if they test positive for flu (which did not happen this year). It is already much harder for parents to stay home when their kids are sick than it was 6 weeks ago.*

**Q: Are offices changing their masking policies? We still require them, but have had to give out more masks in the past 3 weeks than the entire pandemic!**

*A: Stan Weinberger, MD, UVM Medical Center, Pediatric Primary Care (Burlington): UVM MC still requires masks for all regardless of vaccine status.*

*A: Kate Goodwin, RN, CPNP, Lakeside Pediatrics: We are still requiring masks at Lakeside Pediatrics.*

*A: Alicia Jean Veit, MD, Timber Lane Pediatrics: Timber Lane Pediatrics is still requiring masks of all.*

*A: Kathleen Geagan, MD, Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center: At MAH everyone in the building is required to mask and there's no sign of it changing anytime soon.*

**Re: David Nelson, MD, UVM Medical Center, Pediatrics ED / VHEPC: Please join us for our 6<sup>th</sup> EMS Pediatric Case Review of the year on July 19, 7pm.** We will be reviewing a heat related incident as well as a fatal drowning. We will be discussing provider mental health and available resources for providers after difficult calls. Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84765165362?pwd=bUxJdW9tVzEvZ3FVZ2Z0dnZlY4Zz09>

**Re: appointment cancellation of second doses**

*C: Kathleen Geagan, MD, Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center: A plea to the health department: We need more Pfizer availability for our area. Windsor County has only 43+% of 12-15yo vaccinated and it's hard to find. There are no Kinney drug stores around and Rite Aid is not carrying Pfizer, at least in this area. The only pharmacy is Claremont CVS.*

*C: Colleen Moran, MD, Appleseed Pediatrics: We had patients cancel for dose #2 in Lamoille County due to supply.*

*C: Shannon Hogan, DO, UVM Medical Center, Pediatric Primary Care (Burlington): Yet, when I work down in CT we have an overabundance of supply and have to waste Pfizer. This is so sad.*