

## VCHIP CHAMP VDH COVID-19

November 30, 2020 | 12:15-12:45pm Call Questions and Answers\*

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### **VDH Updates: School Cases**

*Dr. Wendy Davis:* The Vermont K-12 COVID-19 Cases in Learning Communities dashboard, which shows the cases only who were in learning communities while they were infectious, will be updated on Tuesday with data through the previous Sunday. We anticipate we will have an update from tomorrow's posting for our Wednesday call.

As we reported last week, as of November 24, 2020, there are 110 total cases with 35 cases reported in the preceding 7 days, which is up from 74 total and 19 cases in the previous week.

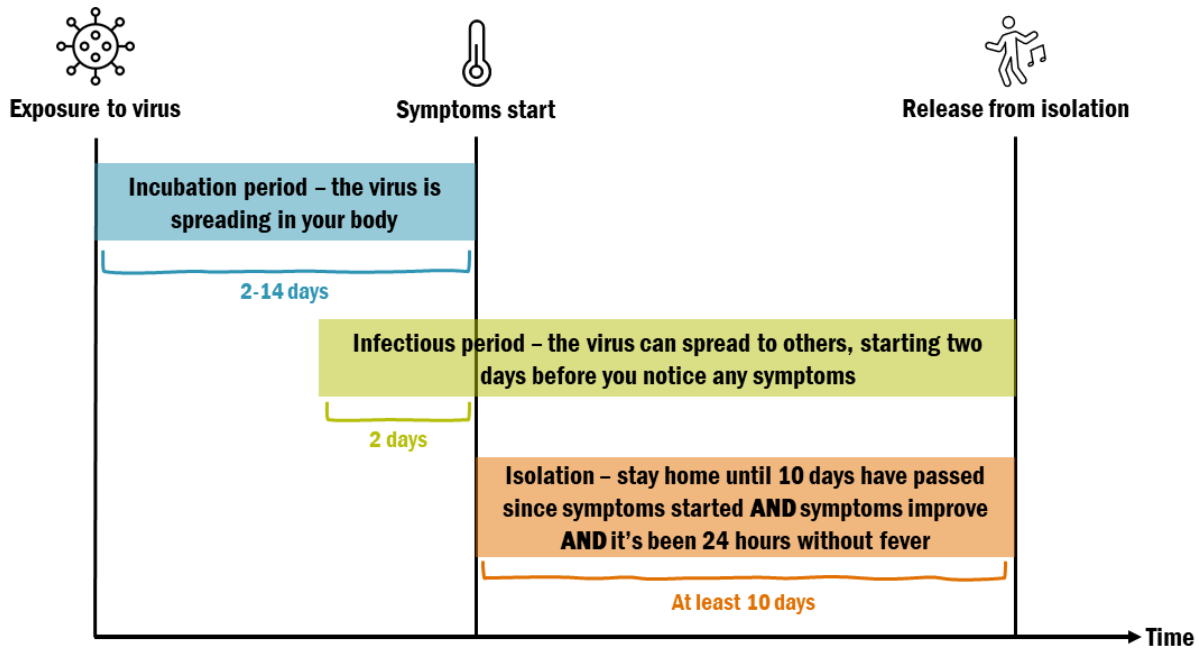
For Vermont's colleges and universities, as of November 24, 2020, St. Michael's College reported 79 total cases, and UVM reported 107 cumulative total cases.

### **VDH Update: Isolation Guidance**

*Dr. Wendy Davis:* The Health Department continues to try to update and improve the guidance they are providing around isolation and quarantine. VDH recently called our attention to some new timelines posted for patients with symptoms and those who do not have symptoms. These graphics may be helpful to share with your patients or folks having trouble understanding this because it's not entirely clear sometimes. VDH had recognized that they were hearing about some incorrect calculation with respect to the time and date as part of this isolation guidance and called our attention to the fact that the 10-day isolation period depends upon whether or not symptoms are present. These two graphics explain that quite nicely.

*Dr. Breena Holmes:* Please take some time to look at these two graphs. It really is just slowing down when you're giving advice about whether the person with COVID is symptomatic or asymptomatic. If you're symptomatic, you have to start the first day of your symptoms is the day that you begin counting for return to life and getting out of isolation. That is sometimes confusing people. We are just noticing a lot of confusion in this arena, so I can't really speak to a specific example. Look at these graphics because I think it's clear when it's put forth in these visuals.

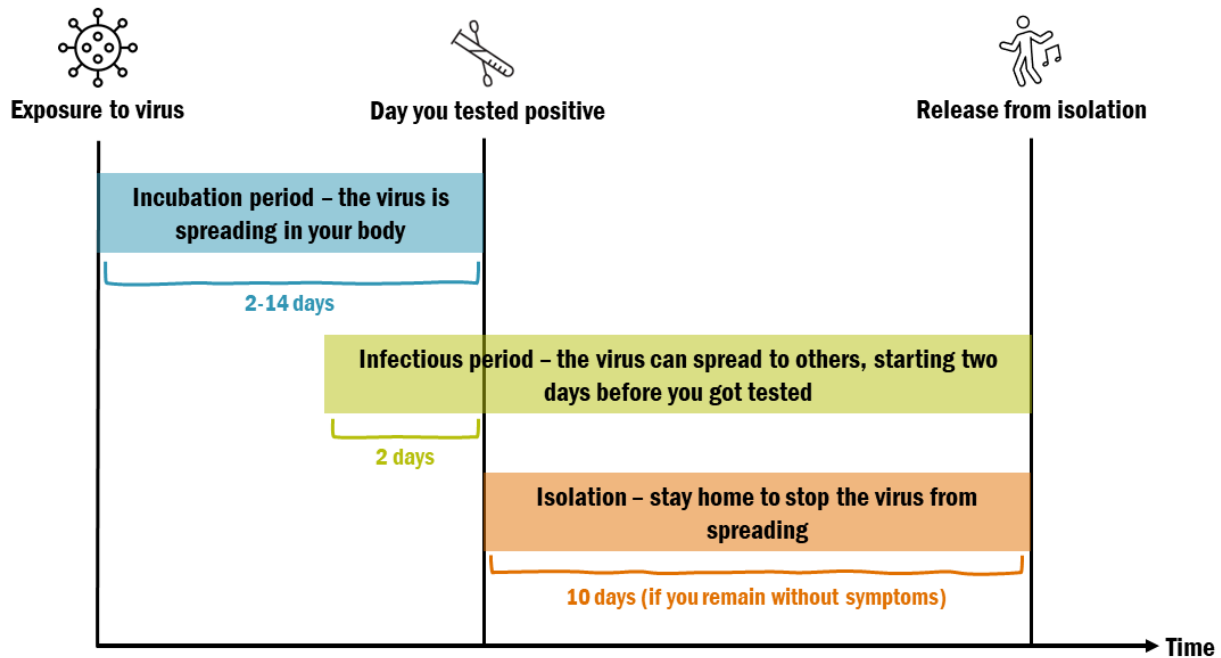
## Timeline for People with COVID-19 who have Symptoms



August 2020

Learn more at [healthvermont.gov/contact-tracing](https://healthvermont.gov/contact-tracing)

## Timeline for People with COVID-19 who don't have Symptoms



August 2020

Learn more at [healthvermont.gov/contact-tracing](https://healthvermont.gov/contact-tracing)

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

For example, If you really did gather on the 26th of November, which is the Thursday, then that's Day Zero. For folks who want to test out of the quarantine, having gathered, that would be 7 days from that gathering date, or you could sit out the full 14 days.

### Vaccine News

*Dr. Wendy Davis:* Just today, Moderna announced that they've applied to the FDA for emergency use authorization (EUA) of their vaccine. You may recall the recent news that they were estimating a 94.1% efficacy rate based on preliminary data. They had a total of 196 cases among their trial volunteers at that point and of the cases, 185 were in the placebo group and 11 were in the vaccine group. No one in the vaccine group had severe disease, so they were of course highly encouraged by that.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices is holding an emergency meeting tomorrow, and we understand that part of their agenda is to finalize the risk eligibility categories for COVID vaccine. We shared that [link to the MMWR](#) last week on their ethical principles for allocating additional supplies of COVID-19 vaccine. Here is the link to join the APIC meeting tomorrow:

<https://www.ustream.tv/channel/VWBXKBR8af4>. No registration is required, and you can join virtually and listen or watch the discussion if you're interested. They will post subsequently minutes in findings.

At the University of California, San Francisco, they do a VuMedi Series, and there has been just a ton on COVID-19 over the past several months. One this past week caught my eye by Paul Offit specifically about the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines. It asks, "Do they prevent asymptomatic transmission? What will distribution look like?" The video is pretty short, a little over 8 minutes. If you're interested in vaccine news, you may want to take a quick look at that.

It's our expectation at this point that we will have a VDH immunization program update this Friday. They had been advised that they may get some news on Wednesday and so they wanted to wait until Friday to be able to bring us the latest news.

### Testing Update – VDH

*Dr. Wendy Davis:* If you look at the VDH website recently, there are a ton of on-demand testing sites posted now beginning today and for a couple weeks into December with many sites all over the state. These are the sites that are in partnership with CIC. These tests are going to the Broad Institute at MIT. Many, many sites are up and running, and many with appointments scheduled, but also with availability. We are still awaiting the testing HAN that we have been expecting from the Health Department, and it has not been released yet.

*Dr. Breena Holmes:* I am feeling hopeful. You all provide great real-life community-based feedback. If this approach is not really taking the heat off of the needs or test access and capacity, then I need to know. These on-demand sites are for anyone, asymptomatic, symptomatic, people trying to get out of quarantine people just curious, people that know they gathered, people that are close contacts, etc. It's a great ever-increasing resource, so I hope it works.

### Pediatricians in the News

*Dr. Wendy Davis:* Our colleague, Jack Mayer, who many of you may know from Rainbow Pediatrics in Middlebury, has published a book of poetry, ***Poems from the Wilderness***. These were composed while walking alone in the woods over 40 years and are a collection about his love of that kind of trail walking in

the back country. He was one of two winners of the Proverse Prize for 2019, which is an international literary competition. There will be a Zoom reading and discussion on Thursday, December 3, at 7 pm, sponsored by Middlebury's Vermont Book Shop (<https://www.vermontbookshop.com>). The proceeds from these various activities are going to the Middlebury Area Land Trust (MALT) and stewards of the Trail Around Middlebury (TAM): <https://www.maltvt.org>. There is also a limited-run letterpress print of one of Jack's poems through Revolutionary Press available at the Vermont Book Shop with the proceeds donated to Outright Vermont/Camp Outright, causes dear to our heart. Congratulations to Jack!

### **Friday Media Briefing (11/27/20)**

*Dr. Wendy Davis:* Secretary French gave the usual education update and recapped that first round of surveillance testing for school staff. Over 9300 tests were administered, and they got 21 positive results. He did get a question in the Q&A period about where those positive cases were located, and he did not have that information immediately available. We may see those cases pop up in the school dashboard. He acknowledged the complex logistics, but he had some anecdotal reports that the testing went pretty smoothly. Superintendent Michael Clark from the Grand Isle Supervisory Union, which is a small supervisory union and has geographic challenges, reported that he worked with his district school nurse. They conducted clinics in four buildings and only had minor glitches. He felt that overall it was a great success. He really appreciated the partnership with the multiple state agencies involved in this (AOE, VDH, AOT, DPS, and VNG). The next phase of the testing begins this week, and they plan to survey 25% of districts weekly and trying to get that to be geographically diverse. They did have lessons learned from the first round that they will be applying. This is really simply one population that can be tested to represent what may be going on in terms of community spread.

Secretary French recapped the updated health screening guidance and the allowance for this question post-Thanksgiving about whether students have participated in a multi-household gathering and also permit exclusion if they get a positive response to that question. He noted that his current focus continues to be on assuring the safety of in-person instruction. They also are beginning to turn their attention to instructional assessment. The National Assessment of Educational Progress has been canceled for this year, but they are waiting and watching for the new federal administration approach to the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBACs), which many of you are familiar with. As he notes, the SBACs are intended to help identify equity gaps in education, but certainly the last eight months have been far from normal, so it's hard to predict how useful that will be. They plan to turn their attention to it with greater intensity following the holidays.

### **Practice Issues: School and Child Care Updates**

*Dr. Wendy Davis:* I'm going take us back to that issue of the allowance by the Agency of Education to incorporate a question about whether a student had participated in a multi-household gathering in particular over the Thanksgiving holiday and noting that the AOE guidance (<https://education.vermont.gov/documents/guidance-for-schools-related-to-limits-on-multi-household-social-gatherings>) to schools was that they may include a question about that as part of their daily screening. There was language issued that read as follows: "Please note that for the purpose of clarity, gathering in pre-established 'pods' related to education and/or childcare remains allowable. Pods related to social activity or informal playgroups are prohibited at this time. New pods of any kinds are discouraged." This was in response to the Governor's Executive Order issued on November 20 prohibiting multiple households from participating in the same social gathering.

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

On November 24, VDH issued updated FAQs on how children can stay safe and prevent the spread of COVID-19 that included language again noting that as of November 14<sup>th</sup>, the effective date of the Governor's recent Executive Order, "you are not allowed to gather with people you don't live with. This includes all inside and outside social, recreational, and entertainment gathering, and in public and private spaces. Stay home if you are sick." I will note the Governor's exception for single individuals who live alone were exempted from that guidance, and then anyone who feels like they're in an unsafe situation. These FAQs also stated, "Gathering in groups or 'pods' related to education or child care that are already formed can continue. Gathering in pods related to social activity, informal play groups, play dates, or sleepovers are not allowed at this time. New pods of any kind are discouraged."

The one area that needs exploration is the difference between what we're seeing among school personnel and the implementation possibly of this question and childcare. Obviously, our schools have a much more structured network and oversight. The DCF childcare unit does oversee childcare regulation, but our child care colleagues, who stood up emergency childcare very early in the spring long before much was known about COVID-19 and then again resumed more routine childcare in June, really have not had the benefit of the same kind of structure, union support, if you will, to be able to get the same pay and benefits as our school personnel colleagues. It calls into question how can we support childcare providers in thinking about the same issue. We talked about this on our VCHIP call on Wednesday, November 24. We did that day after the call seek clarification about some of your questions from VDH. We were trying to get something officially in writing, and, unfortunately, did not get for several days. In that response, what was said was, "While pods may be allowed for childcare or education, individuals, even those in educational or care pods, are prohibited from social gatherings outside their household as defined in the executive order and guidance."

DCF has since also weighed in on how they're providing technical assistance to the childcare group and noting that they are going to continue to follow the published Health Department guidance about childcare that did not include this new screening question. They do advise that a childcare provide may include additional questions, including a question about multi-family gatherings, if administered equally among families/children. There's a very good focus on equity here.

I did note this morning there was a WCAX story about how this is being implemented today, and they called out two or three examples where schools are or are not including the question and taking advantage of that general allowance.

*Dr. Breana Holmes:* I hope everyone can slow down and process each piece of this information because VDH and AOE are getting bombarded, as well as you all, with questions and nuance. I have a meeting tomorrow morning with AOE and VDH communications to get the FAQs right to answer all these nuanced questions. Wendy just distilled it perfectly in a few slides. We want schools to make this decision. The memo is clear that they can add the question, and then they have to abide by the guidance that follows from the question. If they ask and someone says "Oh, yeah, I gathered," then the school needs to enforce the recommended quarantining for the students. Unfortunately, this morning the loop has been, "Well, call the Health Department." We can certainly reinforce the message, "Yes, you need to quarantine," but it isn't our decision. It's the school's decision and then that leads into the childcare conversation, which is a different group of people. There's more discretion, and that's been the way it's been since March. Childcare providers assess their comfort and how they want to conduct business in their screening, whether they're going to add

this question. I think that's what we need to say about this. I just know that you're in the hot seat the away we are.

### **VCHIP-CHAMP Email Update**

*Dr. Wendy Davis:* We had received inquiries regarding post-call emails not being received last week, and it was unclear if this issue was related to the cyberattack on UVMCC. Avery Rasmussen on the VCHIP team worked with LCOM Information Systems (COMIS) to remove (automatic) block due to large percentage of messages marked as SPAM by many recipients originating from our VCHIP-CHAMP mailbox. We sent a test email this morning to those who had notified us. Please continue to let us know if you are not receiving our emails.

### **CHAMP Network MOC QI Project 2020-2021**

*Dr. Wendy Davis:* It's not too late to join our CHAMP QI project: Strengthening VT's High-Performing Medical Homes. Please let us know by December 8, 2020. You can email [vchip.champ@med.uvm.edu](mailto:vchip.champ@med.uvm.edu) with questions about participation.

### **Questions/Discussion**

**Q: I am already getting confusing information from schools to parents. Can we please confirm how long to wait after Thanksgiving gathering to test so they can go back to school? Thanks.**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: Students need to quarantine for 7 days and get a test OR quarantine for 14 days (from gathering date as Day Zero).*

**Q: I just followed the link to the infographics on the VDH web site by typing it in, and I don't see that infographic anywhere on that webpage. Do we have direct links?**

Timeline for People with COVID-19 who have Symptoms:

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/images/2020/10/COVID19-timeline-with-symptoms.png>

Timeline for Close Contacts of People with COVID-19:

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/images/2020/10/COVID19-timeline-close-contacts.png>

Timeline for People with COVID-19 who don't have Symptoms:

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/images/2020/10/COVID19-timeline-without-symptoms.png>

**Q: To clarify, are you saying that the first day of symptoms should be considered Day 1 rather than Day 0?**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: Symptom onset is Day 0 for how long to isolate.*

**Q: Shouldn't it be Day 0?**

*A: Nathaniel Waite, RN, VDH: Quarantine is for: people who were in close contact with someone sick with COVID-19 (Day 1 of your quarantine starts the day after you were last in contact with them); Vermonters who travel out of state (Day 1 of your quarantine starts the day after you return to Vermont); people with no symptoms who are visiting Vermont (Day 1 of your quarantine starts the day after you arrive in Vermont); people who have gathered with another household (Day 1 of your quarantine starts the day after the gathering).*

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**Q: We are starting to receive calls from families with either serial exposures due to serial COVID infection of multiple family members or multiple community exposures. Once a patient (pediatrics or adult) has had confirmed COVID infection, for how long are they considered immune and at which point do they need to quarantine and test again if exposed again? To clarify: The question is: Once a patient has tested positive for COVID, for how long are they considered immune in case of a new exposure following a COVID diagnosis?**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH (verbal): The assumption that you are immune is not a good one.*

*A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVM Children's Hospital & LCOM Department of Pediatrics: That is a great question. Unfortunately, I don't think there is definitive guidance on this.*

**Q: So we should err on the side of caution and consider them not immune then? Just looking to address this in a uniform fashion.**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH (verbal): That is our current approach because it's so unknown.*

*A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVM Children's Hospital & LCOM Department of Pediatrics: At UVMMC, we have protocols in place for when someone needs to be TESTED again following prior COVID, but this is a different scenario than potential re-quarantine if new exposure. As far as I know, for quarantine purposes after new exposure, I am not aware of any guidance to treat differently.*

*A: Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP (verbal): You may enjoy the Paul Offit VuMedi series video as he addressed that and said the same thing because of the lack of evidence.*

**Re: where to get tested**

*C: Stephanie Winters, Vermont Medical Society: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/testing/where-get-tested>*

**Q: Are the on-demand test sites for asymptomatic and symptomatic?**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH (verbal): These are for anyone, even for those who are just curious.*

**Q: Do you have to register for those on-demand sites or are walk-ins welcome?**

*A: Wendy Davis, MD, VCHIP (verbal): We strongly encourage registration, but we do know walk-ins are accommodated. I would say that it's best to register, as it helps them be prepared to accommodate the volume.*

*A: Halle Sobel, MD, UVM Medical Center: I got tested at Williston Armory last Wednesday. I pre-registered and told them my appointment time when I got there and was told it really didn't matter. They would have tested me whenever I showed up even if not registered. This was run by National Guard folks.*

**Q: Are the on-demand (CIC) sites doing all anterior nares self-collection?**

*A: Sharonlee Trefry: School staff testing [CIC] is self-administered. I'm not sure about VDH CIC.*

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: Not self-collection to my knowledge. (Verbal): To my understanding, they are all anterior nares testing as well.*

*A: Stephanie Winters, Vermont Medical Society: I did think the intent was for them to be self-collection at some point.*

*A: TCS: Some test sites are doing "Observed self-collection". Instructed and monitored by clinical staff.*

*A: Halle Sobel, MD, UVM Medical Center: I got tested at Miller Center (by Garnet) and then the Armory. Both were NOT self-collected.*

**Q: Any idea for what the turnaround time for results are at the on-demand sites?**

*A: Monica Fiorenza, MD, Timber Lane Pediatrics (South): I know people who went to the CIC Burlington site on Friday night and got negative results on Sunday (yesterday).*

*A: Elizabeth Hunt, MD, Timber Lane Pediatrics: I saw a bunch of results within 48 hours for asymptomatic contacts last week. Tested Tuesday AM, results Wednesday evening in PRISM.*

*A: Halle Sobel, MD, UVM Medical Center: I got my test results on Saturday for the Wednesday test, but that includes Thanksgiving Day.*

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH (verbal): 15-20% of the samples are coming in with not enough information, so there is a need to track down and correct over 100 tests a day. Turnaround time is also impacted by the administrative piece as well.*

**Q: The CDC states 3 months post-infection (unless you develop symptoms). Should we not give this advice? <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>**

*A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVM Children's Hospital & LCOM Department of Pediatrics: The CDC guidance does say no need to quarantine for 3 months if re-exposed. I was aware of this as far as no need for new testing within 3 months (this is the UVMCMC policy). I was unaware that had extended to quarantine for re-exposures. Thanks! Phew, too much to keep track of!*

**Q: So the next question seems to be: Once a patient has recovered from COVID but qualifies for Day 7 testing due to new exposure, how reliable is the second test result?**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH (verbal): We don't have clear answers right now.*

**Q: The people who went to CIC Burlington did do self-collection. Just wondering if that is most of the sites, or do people get an option?**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH (verbal): Not to my knowledge. National Guard is doing most of the testing themselves.*

**Q: Ben, what's the guidance re: repeat testing following illness? Sorry, still confused regarding the 3 month timeline, could you re-clarify it? So if a child becomes symptomatic within 3 months of COVID recovery, do they need to get tested then? Do they need to quarantine then?**

*A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVM Children's Hospital & LCOM Department of Pediatrics: If someone has had COVID-19, for the next three months they do not need to quarantine if newly exposed to someone with COVID-19, as long as they remain asymptomatic. Similarly, there is no indication for re-testing during that time frame for any reason if asymptomatic.*

**Re: VDH contact tracing is official guidance**

*C: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVM Children's Hospital & LCOM Department of Pediatrics: I will put out the caveat, as always, that any direct guidance from the VDH contact tracing or epi teams for any individual case is always the official guidance that should be followed.*

*C: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: Thank you, Ben, so important to say this!*

**Q: So someone who traveled should get tested immediately after returning and at 7 days? I'm trying to assist a parent who just returned from out of state, and I have received conflicting guidance.**

*A: Stephanie Winters, Vermont Medical Society: If you gather with another household, you should quarantine for 14 days after gathering. Day 1 is the day after you gathered. We advise you to get tested right after the gathering and again on Day 7. If you do not have symptoms and get a negative test result from the Day 7 test, you can end quarantine. This is language from VDH site.*



**Re: positive infant case**

*C: As an FYI, I had a positive 1 month old. Family was sent a pulse oximeter. Pulse oximeter is too big for use. Baby fortunately is now 1 week out and doing well.*

*C: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: Thanks for that feedback. I will let Jennifer Read know. She is running that program and is a pediatrician so she will get it!*

**Q: Is there an update on when high school winter sports practices will begin?**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH: We have asked AOE for the winter sports updates ASAP.*

*A: Jessica Denton, Community Health Team Social Worker, Timber Lane Pediatrics: So this from the VT Principals Association **isn't** correct, "Sports School-based winter sports programs may initiate coach-led practice sessions (e.g., skills and drills work) and intrasquad scrimmages (within a school program) no earlier than November 30, 2020."*

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH (verbal): Yes, Jessica, that's all on hold.*

*A: Benjamin Lee, MD, UVM Children's Hospital & LCOM Department of Pediatrics: All sports (rec leagues and school-based) are on indefinite hold for the time being. They will receive the data weekly to decide if/when sports can resume.*

*A: Sharonlee Trefry, RN, VDH: The Governor was clear about winter sports hold, but that there would be weekly assessments [perhaps by the internal decision making team].*

**Re: adolescent mental health**

*C: Liz Richards: I continue to worry about the mental health of our adolescents, in particular many of whom are barely in school and now have no ability to engage with friends outside in a safe way.*

*C: Jessica Denton, Community Health Team Social Worker, Timber Lane Pediatrics: Liz Richards, agree.*

*C: Sharonlee Trefry, RN, VDH: Liz, school nurses are equally concerned and having to process questions about HS students wanting to "hang out".*

*C: Kathleen Bryant, FNP, CVMC: I couldn't agree more about the adolescents. I am writing so many prescriptions for SSRIs and have very few resources for counseling. Teens don't often want Zoom counseling. Winter sports were something to look forward to for many teens.*

*C: Shannon Hogan, DO, UVM Medical Center Pediatric Primary Care, Burlington: I agree with Liz. Adolescents on screens all day and only contact with friends is through video games.*

**Q: Are multi-household gatherings allowed if they are with persons that do childcare for the family?**

*A: Breena Holmes, MD, VCHIP, VDH (verbal): That's not allowed.*

*A: Becca (Rebecca) Bell, MD, UVM Medical Center: I have found it helpful to frame it as "social gatherings" vs "need for childcare".*