

COVID Update

- Entered low community of transmission level on 11/2
- Bivalent vaccine uptake booster doses – low 20% range at this point
 - Leads country in uptake, along with District of Columbia
- New sub-variants of Omicron on the horizon and come with unique initials
 - These are referred to as recombinants – the marriages of several sub-variants
 - Now being given names that have the letter x in them
 - Still a part of the Omicron family
 - Don't know their impact currently

RSV

- RSV is not a reportable illness, so we don't have a nice measure of it in VT or nationally
- Hospital capacity for this reason is being challenged

Influenza

- Uptake of influenza vaccine in VT isn't as good as prior 2 years
- But efficacy is actually good, around 50%, as we see from Southern Hemisphere experience
- CDC is reporting south central and southeastern states are showing a significant amount of A strain and H1 and H2, with a handful of B
- Timing is earlier this year, usually crawls up the Atlantic coast
- Trying to get the word out about efficacy of the vaccine, but the public is tiring of hearing about respiratory illnesses

hMPXV

- Nothing new happening with hMPXV
- On the threshold of 1,000 doses administered

Misc.

- Press release for the collaboration of VDH with Visual Dx
- Visual Dx is a clinical decision-making tool, which does it through a rich network of information and visual resources (skin findings, x-rays, etc.)
- Suited towards understanding of infectious diseases
- Allows you to report in an easy manner and see great potential for it
- Free of charge for clinical community
- Will be presented at VMS annual meeting this weekend

Cannabis

- Substance Misuse Prevention Council – that council will be making some general recommendations
 - Pretty strong recommendations regarding potency, mental health (adolescent and youth)
- Are people seeing anything different in spectrum of disease? Keep communications coming to the Vermont Medical Society or the Commissioner of Health

Dulce

- Imbedding a family specialist in physician offices to do screenings for maternal issues, for social determinants of health issues, and problems with changes in family dynamic with newborns
- Also can provide legal services
- Piloted in little less than half a dozen families, want to make this more expansive in the future

Questions and Answers

There is an issue getting people in just for their flu shots. Pharmacies are booked weeks in advance. People didn't know until recently that they could just get a flu shot at the walk-in clinics since they were really targeted at COVID, initially. Can we get evening and weekend hours for walk-in clinics?

ML: Last week there were 24,000 doses administered. Hearing all the time, that you call the pharmacy and you're going to wait, which is unfortunate. On Saturday, 10/29, 742 doses of vaccines were given at the University Mall. We're getting media requests and we will try and push this further. Will bring up the idea of extending hours, because that is a good idea.

The vaccine is a good match for this strain. Do you have more information about severity on hospitalizations and death, beyond cases?

ML: Most of the comments from CDC was that the numbers were higher, but that the outcome from flu season wasn't worse.

Vaccine mandate in health care facility, especially in long term care. Are you hearing talk about a yearly type of requirement for boosters?

ML: People are so sensitive to work force issues right now, that that is not on the table right now. Mandates are being withdrawn.