

COVID Update

- COVID is at low community levels
- Bebtelovimab monoclonal antibody is no longer be available
- Evusheld is on its way out too
- Vaccine rate for bivalent is 29%
- Release of vaccine for under 5 of age and it is coming into the state
 - We have a high rate of under 5 vaccinated so far, 17%
- Can request free tests here:
<https://www.covid.gov/tests?fbclid=IwAR0JpLZUD6RwkTzL3nRjsAvOezSHChleprzVgtOSDPkqJ7a8v5m2vgz38vY>

RSV

- The pediatric surge is diminishing a bit
- The adult surge is occurring
- VDH has been putting out a lot of information about getting vaccinated and putting out a press release about expanded hours, bivalent available to under 5, and the closing of state run facilities

MPox

- Have done a few tests for it
- Dramatic plummet nationally and potential removal of public health emergency status

Opioid

- Opioid Settlement Advisory committee – meeting next week
- Probably won't be spending any money just yet, but millions of dollars will be coming into the state for substance use disorder in general
- A lot of opportunity for harm reduction
- Room to work on stimulants that we think will be a rising issue
- Overdose prevention – not sure we need a lot more legislation in this regard, but we need to strengthen and financially support all the programs out there

HIV

- federal government goal to reduce new infections by 90% by 2030
- Strengthen syringe service programs

Tobacco and Nicotine Prevention

- Banning menthol flavors in regard to vaping

Mental Health

- A lot of success with the 988 hotline
- Mental health Integration Council that will come out with a report within the next month

Influenza

- At moderate level, not at high or very high like most states, but don't think this will last long
- Don't see a shortage of vaccines yet
 - SNS – Strategic National Stockpile is available for Tamiflu

Questions and Answers

On the VOS call last week, you mentioned pediatric support volunteers. Can you elaborate on this?

ML: We have acquired the services of 4 pediatric trained nurses. They are already being booked throughout the entire month. 4 respiratory therapists are also booked throughout the month. If you're a retired nurse and want to get involved, please connect us, and let us know. This messaging was also sent out and there has been a great response to that.

Adolescent and pediatric specialty clinics are taking a referral pause for 6 months at UVM Medical center. How can we make sure children and families are getting the care they need?

ML: I am going to have to check in on this. Sounds like it is a workforce related thing and potentially the blending of multiple clinics, and also that there is a long waiting list for service.

In the realm of mental health, glad to hear that it has been recognized as a priority. As we move into the legislative session, can you help us advocate for prevention?

ML: Very hopeful about the DULCE program. Lack of connectedness of youths to their community is a big deal, when they don't feel connected in their community the wrong outcomes occur. The youth council is made up of about 2 dozen kids from around the state to speak about what is affecting them

Our next call will be January 5th - they will be the first Thursday of each month at 12:30 pm in 2023 - same zoom information.

Information will be posted here: <https://vtmd.org/thursday-public-health-updates>