

Respiratory Virus Season

- Is now and will soon be upon us
 - Reenforce essentials
 - Stay home if sick
 - Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

COVID

- Morte active
- 20% hospitalization rate this week in Vermont – however within the range of variability we have been seeing so can't say there is a trend yet
- Newer variants aren't proving to be scarier EG.5 and XBB.1.5 and BA.2.86
- 8 deaths from COVID in Vermont end of August to beginning of September
 - Average age was 83

RSV and Flu

- RSV Vaccine for Pregnant People
 - Approved by FDA
- COVID and flu shots should be taken together, but have no data on taking the RSV vaccine at the same time too

EEE

- Unvaccinated Horse died in Northwestern VT
- 5 mosquito pools tested positive
- Not announcing major mitigation

Climate Change

- Climate change is the greatest public health threat in the 21st century
- 150 health organizations – “a true public health emergency”
- 200 medical journal editors in 2021 – a global temperature rise >1.5 degrees Celsius is the greatest threat to global public health
- Flood prone zones are where local income Vermonters live
- 6 Key Health Impacts of Climate Change in VT
 - Heat related illness
 - Storms and floods = mold, water quality issues
 - Vector borne diseases- ticks and mosquitos
 - Cyanobacteria blooms
 - Water and flood borne diseases
 - Air quality impacts – wildfires, pollens
- Current Events
 - Flood and their impact on health
 - Wildfires and their impact on Air Quality Index
 - Maui
 - Hottest July/year on record
 - Mosquitos – West Nile virus, EEE
 - Hurricanes on both coasts
 - Artic ice predictions
- Health Equity and Climate Change Progress are Interdependent
 - Climate change threatens everyone, but it disproportionately impacts marginalized population and can undermine investments in health equity
 - Climate change solutions can exacerbate health disparities (subsidizing purchase of electric cards)

- Mental Impacts
 - Mental health – farmers, youth
 - Exercise – outdoor recreation becomes riskier
 - Managing chronic illness – heat, air quality
 - Nutrition – soil and crop damage from droughts, floods

Opioids

- Last year was the worst year for opioid deaths, but this year is on track to be the worst
- Opioid Settlement Committee
 - Harm Reduction
 - Naloxone distribution expansion
 - Fentanyl and Xylazine test strips
 - Would care telehealth consultation pilot
 - Contingency management for stimulant use disorder
 - Drug-checking service
 - Enhanced Access to the Treatment System
 - Opioid medication units (“hublets”)
 - Outreach workers
- Ongoing Research into novel harm reduction strategies
 - Impact of buprenorphine decriminalization
 - Decriminalization of other substance = Portugal, Oregon
 - Overdose prevention sites are on the agenda
- Mental health integration council – critical to provide a sustainable model to incorporate mental health into all care
- Redesign Hub and spoke system = manage all substance and treat co-occurring mental health disorders
- Governor’s 10-point plan for public safety

Questions and Answers

Are you able to say any more about conclusions/outcomes of MH Integration Council?

ML: No one size fits all report. Good formula for a reimbursement model, a lot of talk about peer support and peer counselors as part of a greater system of care, for designated agencies there will be a models of community behavioral centers that are more encompassing in their care and more integrated with health care system, models like UVMHC is doing with mental health care embedded in care. There are so many things that will be on the list. WE can’t say that one is necessary or better than the other.

Do you recommend waiting on the RSV vaccine for over 60 until more information is in as to possible risks from the vaccine?

ML: Data from the studies showed several neurological signals, that made people cautious in how they approach it even though I think the benefits for those over 60 with respiratory or cardiac issues would be great enough that it would probably outweigh any significant risk.

Our next call will be October 5, 2023

Zoom Information

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86726253105?pwd=VkVuNTJlZFQ2R3diSVdqdlJ2ZG4yQT09>

Meeting ID: 867 2625 3105 / Passcode: 540684

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