

Governor Scott

- Focus on budget and pension bills

David Coates

- providing feedback on implications of pension problem and solutions

Mark Levine – COVID update

- Still in similar place – watching and monitoring for BA.2 impacts
- Virus is still spreading but increases in cases and hospitalizations an order less than with Omicron
- Most Vermonters are not seeing serious impacts
- Vermont still in top 2-3 states with regard to testing so have more insight into cases than other states with regard to PCR tests
- We can still live our lives more normally since the risk is lower
- But overall risk is different than individual risk - some still at higher risk and they may want to take more precaution
- CDC guidance mirrors this – if you are at high risk, talk to your health care provider about masking
- Court case striking down mask mandate on public transportation: was based on legal and procedural grounds, not for public health reasons – VT continues to recommend for public transportation
- If you are older or at higher risk, please reach out right after a positive test to consider treatment
- If you are sick, please stay home to keep any illness from spreading – seeing flu, other respiratory and GI illnesses
- Free rapid take home tests continue to be available at testing sites

Questions and Answers

Vaccinated and non-vaccinated case rates appear to have increased at the same rate – what does that mean?

ML: that's right – vaccination pretty much guarantees protection against serious outcomes like hospitalization and death, but anyone can be infected

What are self reporting numbers looking like?

As of last week, 1600 tests were reported, about 1100 positive – this is great – but still wonder proportion of how many are getting reported

What about masks coming off, cheering on airlines, given how transmissible this is?

ML: The judge made this decision based on other considerations. Based on being in a “wave” of BA2 in the northeast right now, would like to be more cautious. These are enclosed, congested settings.

BA2 wave in UK has already looked to be subsiding – do we expect this to happen in VT?

ML: all states in Northeast have increased cases in last 7-14 days but have not seen a big surge/spike – has been a low level plateau – anticipate this can only run its course for another few weeks – but modelers still not willing to call the outcome of this increase

What about feedback on conviction of a nurse in TN for a medical error?

ML: doesn't know enough to have a comment at this time

Medical monitoring bill for PFOA?

Scott: if no technical problems with the bill, expects to sign it

A reader has experienced what they think is a vaccine adverse reaction to Moderna but has not heard back from federal or state public health departments and his doctor won't confirm, what else can he do?

ML: would expect reported to vaccine adverse event reporting system, may be plausible or not explanations, can also seek other opinions through the health care system such as a specialist

Another question on breakthrough case rate – also looks to be the same hospitalization rate?

Scott: states are now counting this differently. Some states like NH are now eliminating those who were in the hospital and tested positive but not hospitalized because of COVID;

ML: right – this percent in hospital actually because of COVID is between 38-55% each week; also note that spread between unvaccinated and vaccinated getting hospitalized was large at peak of waves; pool of people available to get it who are unvaccinated is getting much smaller

What about outbreaks in schools, childcare?

ML: schools, childcare are still really mirroring community – they may just be clusters or isolated cases that come from the community in which they live

Can any increase in cases be due to end of test for tots programs? Or other ways to support childcare?

ML: does not have firm data on childcare in front of him, have ability to do testing – nothing much has changed; still waiting to hear about vaccines