VMS Notes on Governor Scott Press Conference from Tuesday 5.4.21

Mike Smith – Gov is in convo with White House and other governors

- Vermont 1st in the nation in administering COVID vaccine
- Get your vaccine now
- We are transitioning our vax program to provide more opps for walk-in clinics at worksites, community areas and is meant to make it easy and convenient
- Middlebury college and Bennington College today and other colleges throughout the state and are open to all eligible Vermonters
- Tunbridge fairgrounds this Friday – appts recommended but walk-ins will be available
- Thunder road and other speedways clinics are walk-ins only
- EMS Newport, Glover and Canaan – May 8th J&J clinics throughout Essex-Orleans County
- Vermont has been successful in our allocation - Overall process 351k 104K first dose and 247K first and last dose
- Get vaccinated so we can visit our loved ones again – if you haven’t been vaxxed please make an appt.

Pieciak

- Continue to see improving COVID trends throughout the US, the region and in VT
- This week 537 cases – 7 day avg remains stable – 2 weeks lowest totals in 6 months
- Vt leads the region in testing as well
- Additionally, by age 40 and over decrease by 22 percent – under 40 increased by 23 %
- 70% of over 40 have started vaccination - under 40 only 41% vaxxed
- VT is far ahead in each age category except 18-29 yr old – no better gift to give Mom than to get vaccinated
- Essex cty saw a jump in cases last week – the counties over the border in NH and ME have had influence
- CDC anticipates cases falling in VT over the next 4 weeks
- Get vaccinated as soon as possible
- Hosp. rate down significantly – VT has fewest number of hospitalizations per capita in the US-we expect continue to decline
- 17 deaths in the month of April down from March – further decrease in May expected
- VT is number 1 in doses administered 95.5% of 65 and over have received at least one dose
- 57.4% of Vermonters that have started vaccination – anticipate we will meet our VT Forward plan goals – if those unvaxxed stand up to do so

Sarah Squirrel

- This month is mental health awareness month and this week children’s mental health week
- Prior to COVID many of kids were already suffering
- Covid left many children not able to go to school and impacts our most vulnerable youth
- PACE – youth ages 12-17 more depressive and anxiety – teens report increased depressive symptoms and elevated anxiety
- Alarming surge in youth presenting in the ER for mental health needs
- Covid has had mental health impact
• Fundamentally our efforts to reopen our schools have been commendable
• Social and emotional functioning is optimum for kids success – as they attend school we need to attend to their social and emotional health and wellbeing
• Schools need to know they are not alone in this and can only happen with partnership with Education, Mental health and Health
• One of the best and revered mental health systems in the country
• Success beyond 6 – local community mental health agency and schools
• I have run a program in Northern VT and know how powerful it can be - A 3 and ½ yr old that got himself to school in a diaper and an empty lunchbox

We will continue to address mental health needs and that all children can meet their needs and progress
Afterschool – school matters – rebuild sense of optimism and connection to communities and commend the complexity of reopening schools
Children are resilient if we provide the right supports so they can thrive – as we have the best conditions in the country
Want to acknowledge these are still hard times in Vermont – don’t be afraid to reach out and to get some help. Call 211

Levine
• Cases are on positive trajectory – only one day over 100 in the last 2 weeks
• 7-day cases rate is 88 – compared to national 101.6
• Congratulate everyone getting vaccinated for helping end this pandemic
• Need to keep a close eye on the variant as we move to the end of the pandemic
• Maybe we are so use to hearing this it is losing its impact – just look at India to remember
• We do have some power over this virus through vaccination – part way is just not going to cut it – it is your turn now – your shot is waiting for you!
• More than half the pop. – some of you may just be waiting to see – we have a year’s worth of real-time data to show that these vaccines are safe and effective
• We are not hearing about deaths in VTers over 65 – because of the vaccine
• Studied in thousands of people, proven effective and real world results they mirror what was shown in testing
• Don’t assume others will protect you
• Still have a role in helping others get their way to vaccination
• Reach out to people, especially if younger, to get vaccinated
• No matter what there is an option available for everyone – VT being a leader in vaccination proves this is true. Your influence likely means more than you know
• We will make it easy as possible – with the right information from the right person they will get it done.
• Governor not here yet – last several days Dr. Fauci and others have been weighing in on herd immunity – 30% of Americans have not gotten vaccinated. COVID will become a disease that younger and healthier people will get and may be that is okay. But that is not where I stand – let’s continue to make VT the safest place to live. Only 8 states that have a curve that looks like Vermont’s
• What about the outcomes in young people when it starts moving to this age group and hospitalizations and long haul symptoms
• Vermont can do better
Gov Scott
Just off the phone with White House – Pfizer and Moderna relatively steady along with J&J – no increase but steady
Good news that they are making some changes to the ordering process – previously we could not order over our maximum but now we can

- Green-up day on Saturday – thanking Vermonsters.
- Scott found an iPhone and I plugged it in and it took a charge – found near Berlin Pond Rd. Give a call to the office and identify if you think you lost it.
- We can’t let up now on vaccination – need to get younger populations to get vaccinated. Even though we hit our May 1 target – we need to increase our numbers to hit our June 1 target – if we hit our mark by July we can get back to more normal times
- If you want to attend concerts, fairs and festivals than get vaccinated
- This truly is a time of service – my father didn’t hesitate at his country’s call for service and he lost both of his legs
- Now we are asking you to step up and all we are asking you to do is get vaccinated for your kids, your parents and even your grandparents
- Plenty of appointments – leave you with one more thought – if you are wondering what to get your Mom this mother’s day send her a picture of yourself getting a shot. I bet that will mean a lot

Questions – the EUA for Pfizer for 12-15 yr olds?
Levine - 25-27,000 in those age ranges in VT – we think their will be very strong uptake – we think it could be by next week – could coincide nicely and we have our pediatric community already working with the families

ERs and kids and what does the plan look like?
Squirrel – not a new issue and having youth wait for long times in ERs – AHS presented our solutions to this issue – symptomatic of a larger system issue – which is flow. Trending down now because of lack of stepdown capacity – which means residential solutions. The pandemic has continued to have an impact on our symptoms of care – worked with VDH to provide more in-person care to increase capacity. From a resource standpoint we are in a great position in the state. Providing mobile response in Rutland pilot and we can deploy and invest many of the increased dollars coming into DMH.

Do you have a dollar amount and what would this look like?
Squirrel - The good thing is we have already invested into our community mental health systems – additional $8m coming into DMH and will deploy these funds in a strategic way

How will you rollout the 12-15 yr old vax system?
Mike Smith – you will see a hybrid model on vaccination administration and it will be in schools and etc. Given the age of this has to be a hybrid model – parents could come to the school.

Colleges trying to figure out a plan – are their recommendations on whether colleges should require COVID vaccination?
Scott – I think its necessary to create a path forward I the Fall. Levine – already 5 schools in VT have said they will mandate COVID vaccination to attend college. The academic communities would prefer to have normal operations which requires a vaccinated student body. A lot of other things to address. Very early
in the stages right now – we are seeing a lot of actions on that front around the nation. Those communities already speaking

VDH mentioned walk-in clinics – is there uptake?
Scott – we definitely want to meet young people where they are and we did see success in Barton in the drive-up. Smith – we will be doing walk-ins everywhere and the drive-ups at the speedway is walk-ins only. We are taking this tact in our strategy – transitioning from mass clinic to the various venues and opportunities to walk ins – to target the 18-29 yr olds. Haven’t looked at the demographics at Barton but just goes to logic that if we go to venues where young people are we will attract the young people. Maybe Church Street and the waterfront. Etc.

You said the potential is for VT to ask for more vaccine what is our current cap?
Scott – we’ve been allocated 20,000 per week and we could ask for up to 50% more if other states are not asking for their doses. Improvement in the system if it is not being used by other areas.

If a school can’t return to in-person – can VT relax CDC guidance?
Scott – we are expecting all schools to return to in-person instruction by Fall.

VT cases by age slide – second highest increase in cases in 10-19 yr olds?
Pieciak – cases have gone up but cases in schools have gone down. Happy to provide a further breakdown by the age that you like

A reader discussed a fraudulent claim - Hackers had her driver’s license and what other personal information may have been compromised?
Harrington – could go back to ten-year data or could be national data disclosure – like Experian? So, from that perspective it doesn’t take that much to get a driver’s license, social security and income level.
It is a more coordinated national and international crime ring pulling from data from the past. Issue with the 1099s was an error at the VT department and we felt we need to protect those people. We have sent out information on what people should do if they believe they are part of UI fraud – an individual who has a fraudulent claim is held harmless.

How do the follow-ups on the second dose work for the walk-in clinics?
Smith - We do schedule them in a follow-up or close clinic. I am not concerned that they won’t show up for a second dose. We have had very limited people that haven’t shown up for their second dose – don’t foresee having issues with that.

How is the State accounting for people getting vaccinated in other states?
Smith – in health care facilities we will get notified in the registry. We are making sure that we capture everyone in NH along the border especially in the pharmacy system. Hospitals regularly report – just getting notification from CDC with VA and DOD data.