Gov. Scott: First, after reconciling the data with CDC, as of Saturday we are at about 78% of all eligible Vermonters who have received their first dose. Which leaves us with 11,346 Vermonters to get vaccinated before we lift all restrictions. Keep in mind because yesterday was Memorial day we are expecting to receive the numbers from Sunday and Monday. Even after we reach 80 percent we will not stop pushing. But we are seeing the results of the vaccine effort – 3 hospitalizations, no deaths in 15 days and cases at lowest numbers in 6 months We will continue to do this work to ensure that Access is not a barrier.

M. Pieciak: today VT has lowest new case rate, lowest death and hospitalization and highest vax rate – VT safest state in the nation
- 15 days btw a covid death
- May – 6 Covid-19 deaths – lower end of projections
- Anticipate fewer in June
- Lowest hospitalization rate in the country – down 37% over the last 2 weeks
- VT’s cases decrease
- 92 new COVID-19 cases this week
- May – 99 cases in a single day vs lower than that for a whole week
- Decrease in case counts across VT – in every county and in every age band
- Favorable trends and mobility has returned to pre-pandemic baseline
- Vermonters spending less time at home than at any other time in the last 14 months
- This attests to the protection the Vaccine provides
- Cases falling into single digits
- Vaccine progress – the last 14 days – CDC has higher number by 8800 p.
- VT is at 78% - needing about 11,000 Vters to get vaxxed
- VT still leads the nation – ranking highly for those who have started, completed and for those over 65 yrs old

The region also significantly decreased in COVID-19 case counts
Improvement in VT, NE and the entire region heat map – which tracks back to the regions high uptake of the vaccination
Quebec at 60% vaccinated – favorable trends to continue through the region

Mike Smith: 11,346 to get vaccinated to lift all of the restrictions
Due to the holiday Sunday and Mondays vaccine numbers have not been counted
1,000 Vters vaccinated June 11th, 1500 vaccinated June 7th and 3K June 5th

In recent days the daily number has dropped – 1400 on Friday and 1500 on Saturday

We have been reconciling between the CDC and our numbers to get rid of duplicates
Make every effort to bring the vaccine to Vermonters for where they live and play
Just need a few more to reach our goal

VTers 12+ 77.9%
White House uses 18+ for first dose – 81.7% for VT using this method
All Vermonters 67.8%
39 pop-up clinics scheduled this week
More people using walk-in options not scheduling appointments

**Dr. Levine:**
From the time we all learned what this virus was and now 440,000 have stepped up to get vaccinated. This is why we can lift the restrictions because of the safety of the vaccine. Our recent data shows our theory works and that we can lift the restrictions. When we can trust the vaccine we can go out without masks and having less restrictions. For our 80 percent goal and public health we will continue to push for everyone to get vaccinated. Check in with your primary care provider to see if they have the vaccine or if it will be available at worksites.

The higher vaccination rate the better chance we can fully suppress the virus. There are still some people who are susceptible – continue the same guidance for people who are not vaccinated or who cannot get vaccinated at this time. These will be recommendations – common sense rules of the road to prevent common illnesses. I hope that our new attention to public health will keep the attention on these healthy activities.

**Question and answer:**
What is the update on deploying the vaccine to primary care providers?
Levine: There is not an update yet – we could only give Moderna to 19 providers. We are hoping to hear good news from the Whitehouse on deploying more supply.

How will you incentivize the last 11,000 to get vaxxed?
Levine – we have gotten to 80% with very modest incentives, creemees and concert tickets. Vermonters were getting vaccinate without incentives so I don’t see us increasing these.

What is the new normal?
Levine: over the last weekend most Vermonters were wearing masks indoors. Outdoors most were not wearing a mask. Vermonters are still adhering to the more stringent guidance – takes time to transition. Takes time to settle-in – that we are almost at 80% vaccinated and driving the case rates further down. People need to move down in guidance on their own timeline. We were more cautious than other states which is fine.

Gov. Scott: Here’s what we heard. Dr. Fauci pleases to see the rate go down across the country. We will get the same amount of Pfizer and Moderna as the last few weeks. No J&J from the federal government. Nothing on lifting the border at this time – but Quebec has made great strides in the last few weeks. We will continue to advocate for the border to be lifted when safe as we are so reliant on the tourism.

Lot of out-of-staters in VT right now?
Scott: I expect that there are a number of people visiting VT.

We saw cases fall last summer- how much is our results due to a natural seasonal decline? What is the risk of this going back up in the Fall?
Levine: We did have a surge in the south and west of us – so people were feeling like COVID-19 isn’t much like other respiratory diseases. The vaccine will be the new part of the discussion as we enter flu season. Although we may see a little uptick in the virus when we go back indoors. I believe we in the Northeast are doing our best and we can influence the suppression of the virus. Scott: This year vs last
year is like apples and oranges – including travel restrictions and now we have no restrictions and the case numbers are dropping rapidly. Which shows how the vaccine is critical to protecting ourselves and having a lot more normal winter.

What was our federal allotment for last week and did we request more?
Scott: I can’t tell you what our request was – maybe 20,000. Smith: Last week, the Pfizer and Moderna did not change – it wasn’t the full allocation for Pfizer. Trying to draw down the number of vaccine that we will use. The J&J should be in supply at the end of June. I don’t know what the numbers are specifically – we hear the numbers on Tuesday and then line up our vaccine efforts with those numbers. They are trying to use Pfizer and Moderna supply so they don’t go bad.

Canada wants to be at 75 percent of Canadians vaccinated before opening the border?
Scott: it really depends on how they are counting it. Like President Biden has said – his goal is over 70 percent for those over 18. So, it really depends on the metrics of first dose, second dose, over 18.

Vermont came in last in supporting federal employees? Why doesn’t the legislature support these people?
Scott: I have wondered why VT is one of 6 states that doesn’t exempt military pensions from being taxed – I am baffled by this.

It appears the positive test rate in Orleans Cty seems inordinately high – or whether people are more likely to be tested these days?
Levine: do you have the positivity rate? 6 percent. That does seem high so I suspect the number is changing as we speak. I do fear that they may represent more people are symptomatic and so getting tested. I suspect that number is going to come down – considering the whole state is less than 1 percent. I do think we are catching it on the down swing now.

Scott going to ask Com Pieciak to illuminate Prime Minister Trudeau’s remarks
They want 75% vaccinated with first dose – 25% fully vaccinated, 58% across Canada are vaccinated, over 60% of Quebecois vaccinated.

Who decides who opens the border and how that works?
Scott: It’s a high-level decision between Trudeau and Biden. Again the NE Governors sent a letter offering to share vaccine to help vaccinate our friends to the North to expedite this process.

Do you think we face restrictions again when we get into the Fall?
Scott: there is no playbook on this but my gut says we wont have to do anything because we are at 80% vaccinated.

Levine: if you look at sequential testing – 3 weeks ago – 30,000s
2-weeks ago – 20,000s
1 week ago – 10,000s
But when you look at our state at almost 80 percent. Makes it challenging to ask people to test when most are vaccinated. Want people to know that testing is as available as it was 6 months ago. Please don’t think that it is no longer necessary.

Is the guidance different for someone fully vaccinated?
Levine: if you have symptoms of COVID – get tested. We will have illnesses and common cold viruses that will resurface without masking

Is it even legal to share vaccines with Canada and Mexico?
Scott: I don’t know the answer to that but our thought was if we could offer it right at the border it would help them – but we will see what they say.

If a business owner want to host a vaccine pop-up – how do they do it?
Smith – call the number and we really want employers to bring the vaccine to us.

Job openings and businesses cant seem to fill vacancies?
Scott: We had the lowest unemployment rate in the nation of 2.2 percent pre-pandemic. It’s the same across the country – gas can’t be delivered across the country. Not a VT problem – this is a US problem. We need to do everything we can to make Vermont more affordable, welcoming and every tool possible.

Following up on the CDC showing 8 deaths related to the vaccines? Do we have access to all of the medical reports? How many examiners does the Chief Medical Examiner have?
A lot of questions. It usually a qualified health provider talking to a chief medical examiner office – there are two in the the primary office and then examiners in every public health office across the State. Still allows for the CDC to come up with their own conclusions – we have not heard anything to indicate it was related to vaccines. Have you reached out? Levine: thus far no, but we report these things to the CDC and they are overwhelmed. No thought of putting it on the dashboard, because we have not ascertained that these deaths are directly linked to vaccination.

Sec. French: Schools recovery plans due today? When will parents be able to see a plan that says this is what my school is doing to recover from the pandemic. Will it be revisited in a year to see if we met the targets?
Yes – there are three areas: social, emotional and mental supports; re-engagement and academics. It should be available now and this is a stakeholder, iterative process.

77.9% data is accurate through Saturday?
Scott: we do have these numbers and we keep track of all of the clinics we oversee, but there are a number of other opportunities to get vaccinated like the federal pharmacy. If we try to just give our numbers it is not accurate. The federal numbers are reported to the CDC first and then we receive them. We have to take into account the numbers in the pharmacies – quite a bit of business. Want to use one set of numbers – we will keep track of it the way we have now. I think we should be under 10,000 and we will continue to chip away.

A veteran was going into a short quarantine before a procedure even after being fully vaccinated? Why are these restrictions needed?
Levine: I believe that is from a VT hospital – not from the State. Right now, I agree with a fully vaccinated person not having any quarantine, but hospitals are free-standing businesses and we have given businesses the right to have any restriction in place to keep their business safe.

Is it time for the State to modify the testing protocols – to avoid another billable service?
Smith: When we hit the 80 percent than hospitals wont need to have restrictions. All the procedural guidance will be gone but the individual hospital has the prerogative to have their own requirements for their customers.

If vaccines are required for educational institutional access – will we be liable if people get sick from the vaccine?
Scott: I think that is a better question for a lawyer. I think a business has the right to determine their own policies – if you don’t like it – go somewhere else.

Breakthrough cases on NY Yankees?
Levine – one mildly symptomatic cases and 8 non-symptomatic cases. You could look at it that the vaccine did what it was supposed to do in preventing severe illness. The reality is that most of the data and the CDC uses that the likelihood of transmitting the virus after vaccination is very low. Don’t have a full accounting of what happened.

What happens after we reach 80%?
Scott: we will continue to use pop-ups and go to where Vermonters are- there are still young people that will need to get vaccinated.

Anymore push to get people to take their masks off?
Scott: I can understand that – so giving masks up is difficult, but we continue to watch the science. People need to be given apace to come to that conclusion on their own.

Any insight to this duplicative CDC reporting issue?
Smith: We have been very diligeent to make sure that the numbers align and we want everything reconciled. We did not want to get into a situation of changing numbers after we announced we had reached 80 percent. Just being uber conservative.

Why are native American vax numbers so low and what are you doing about this?
Levine: There has been a couple of Abenaki clinics – but you are right that the lowest age range for vaccinated native Americans are 65 and older. Some of this is because the older BIPOC may have lack of trust in the government because of longstanding injustices that are hard to change overnight. We are working with all of our health care providers to meet the reservations of indigenous, black and Hispanic Vermonters to help break down these barriers.

Some continue to worry about the cost of the vaccine – what is the State doing about this?
Levine: I haven’t heard that and we