



**I. Welcome and Introduction:** VEM Director Erica Bornemann

- This will be the last regularly scheduled call we will be hosting and we will move these calls to an as needed basis.
- We will be updating the VEM webpage where the Call Notes are currently posted and keeping the survey link used to ask questions active. You can submit your questions there and we will post questions and answers to that VEM webpage as appropriate. That page can be found at: [vem.vermont.gov/covid19firstresponders](https://vem.vermont.gov/covid19firstresponders).
- On today's call we will be joined by DEPRIP Director Dan Batsie. We will be providing you all an update on impending hazardous weather, an overview of the State's response to COVID-19, and we will have time for additional questions at the end of the call.

**II. COVID-19 Overview/VDH Comments:** Dan Batsie, DEPRIP Director

- **Overall update on COVID-19 in Vermont**
  - Current Data
    - There are a total of 112,906 cases of COVID-19 including 177 new cases.
    - The state is averaging 163 cases per day in the last 7-days.
    - There has been a 20% decrease in last 7-days and a 43% decrease in the last 14 days.
    - Cases have decreased 91% since the peak of the Omicron variant.
    - The seven-day percent positivity rate has decrease to 4.6%, the lowest since October 2021.
    - There have been a total of 604 deaths including two new deaths.
    - There are 32 people hospitalized with COVID-19 including 4 people in the ICU.
- **Questions:**
  - More COVID-19 statistics are available on the [Department of Health's website](#).
- **Vaccination updates**
  - Vaccine appointments can be made by visiting the [Vermont Department of Health website](#) or by calling (855) 722-7878.
  - More COVID-19 vaccination statistics are available on the [Department of Health's website](#).
- **Testing updates**
  - Testing is widely available at VDH and pharmacy locations with appointments, and walk-ins are available in some locations. Find locations on the [Where to Get Tested website](#).
- **Future of the Health Operation Center**

- This spring the Health Operation Center will begin to transition a lot of the work in the command center back to the normal Health Department. That will begin sometime this Spring

### III. SEOC Overview/VEM Comments: VEM Director Erica Bornemann

- **SEOC status:** For the remainder of this week the SEOC will remain partially activated every workday from 0800 until 1600 in a virtual status. Tomorrow, on March 4<sup>th</sup>, the SEOC will demobilize and return to monitoring status. Vermont Emergency Management will continue to support the response to COVID-19 through normal operations.
- This will be the last weekly call. We will transition calls to a more ad hoc basis. If any new variances come up with COVID-19 we will use this platform to share information as it becomes available.
- The 100% reimbursement and cost share for FEMA funding for COVID-19 response costs has been extended to July 1, 2022. This includes the continued use of Title 32 National Guard response forces. After July 1<sup>st</sup>, the cost share will decrease to 90%.
- **PPE/Mask/Testing Updates:**
  - Emergency services can still order KN95 masks via the order form:  
<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=O5O0IK26PEOcAnDtzHVZxnYHsES1qh9Hs2EGYmwc2tBURDVPSDJDs1hUTzdJMFixVDZHQ1JHS1cxViQIQCN0PWcu>
- **Hospital Operations Support**
  - **Staffing support:** During the high point of the COVID response 60 Vermont National Guard Staff, 30 FEMA personnel, and a number of EMS agencies and other resources were providing staffing support to hospitals. This support will demobilize as of 3/4/22 as COVID-19 cases have decreased in hospitals.
  - The state has maintained and continues to maintain a nursing contract to support hospitals throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Hospitals continue to face resource shortages as it relates to personnel in general.
  - The Agency of Human Services and the Vermont Department of Health are actively engaged with the hospitals to work through these operational challenges that they continue to face.
- **Questions from Call Participants**
  - **Is there any anticipation in recommendations for indoor masking for trainings and meetings for fire and EMS personnel based on the recommendations of the CDC?** The discussions are happening at senior leadership, but we can't speak to the exact time frame. You will see some change as we get more stakeholder input from the Federal Government and the CDC. At this time, we have not made any specific changes to the fire, EMS or law enforcement recommendations we've made in the past.
  - **What is your understanding for current guidance of masking in public buildings?** The CDC guidance is broad and intended to guide organizations in their own decision making based on the level of risk that you see at that time. I

- **Ben Rose- VEM Recovery-** With the White House extension of the 100 % FEMA cost share for eligible cost through July 1<sup>st</sup>, new applicants for public assistance will be cutoff after July 1<sup>st</sup>. If you represent a community that has not submitted any cost to FEMA for eligible PPE, plexiglass shields, or other costs related to COVID-19 response you will need to at least register your organization by July 1<sup>st</sup>. Additional guidance is forthcoming but if you have questions, contact Kim Canarecci, Public Assistance Officer, or Ben Rose, VEM Recovery/Mitigation Section Chief.