

2/10/22 Municipal & First Responder Call Notes

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

- Welcome participants on the call.
- This is the weekly call for first responders and local officials.
- 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.
- A reminder to folks that participants are on mute and will remain on mute until questions at end of the call. If you have an issue unmuting through the app, please use the chat window to ask your question or use *6 if you are on the phone only.
- On today's call we will be joined by DEPRIP Director Dan Batsie. We will be providing you all an overview of the State's response to COVID-19, and we will have time for additional questions at the end of the call.

AGENDA:

- I. **Intro/call format**
- II. **COVID-19/VDH overview**
- III. **SEOC overview/VEM comments**
- IV. **Q&A with participants**

II. **COVID-19 Overview/VDH Comments:** HOC Incident Commander and DEPRIP Director Dan Batsie

- **Overall update on COVID-19 in Vermont**
 - Current Modeling and Cases
 - Vermont has a total of 108,577 total cases which includes 398 new cases. We're averaging 367 cases per day in the last 7-days. We're still in a period of decline for the case counts.
 - There has been a 47% decrease in the last 7-days and 64% decrease in the last 14-days.
 - 7-day percent positivity now down to 8.1%. That is the lowest it has been since early January of this year.
 - Vermont Deaths are at 565 to date, including 3 new today.
 - 0.5% of all COVID-19 cases have resulted in death.
 - 76 individuals are hospitalized with COVID-19; with 23 in the ICU and 5 on ventilators.
 - There was a 2% decrease in new hospitalizations over the past 7 days, a 9% decrease in overall hospitalizations in the past 7 days. ICU is what we're keeping the closest eye on and there is a 17% decrease in ICU over past 7 days.
 - For Hospital Support there is a great deal of hospital and Long Term Care Facility staffing issues. We're working with them to provide support, such as transporting patients to other facilities and housing patients that don't belong in the hospitals but need some level of care.
 - More COVID-19 statistics are available on the [Department of Health's website](#).
- **Vaccination updates**
 - We have 22 vaccination sites today.
 - Vaccination and getting boosters are still the best protection against COVID-19.
 - Vaccine appointments can be made by visiting the [Vermont Department of Health website](#) or by calling (855) 722-7878.
- **Testing updates**
 - We have 22 test sites today.
 - We're working on guidance for first responders on how best to use antigen testing. When you have antigen tests available to you, we want to make sure you're using them in the most effective way. More will be coming on that soon.
 - We're also working to have a supply of antigen tests that we can provide in the case of an operational threat to EMS or other critical infrastructure. This is not something that we have in place right now and

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we don't yet have the supply chain, but we're working to create that capability. I'll be speaking with stakeholder groups to identify next steps in that process. Hopefully we'll have more information on that next week.

III. SEOC/VEM Comments: VEM Director Erica Bornemann

- **State Emergency Operations Center status:** The SEOC remains partially activated in support of the Department of Health and other partners.
- **PPE/Mask/Testing Updates:** The SEOC has been working on an objective to get contracts in place for towns to purchase masks and tests.
 - Buildings and General Services has executed 3 contracts that are available for towns to purchase testing resources directly from distributors (not manufacturers) and they are through Rhino, Safeware, and Wellness Coaches.
 - Town will reach out to the primary contact to request a quote, then the Contractor agrees to quote pricing at best-then-available pricing for government and/or institutional purchasers. Items available include:
 - KN95 masks meeting applicable Kn95 standards
 - KF94 masks meeting applicable KF94 standards
 - Rapid Antigen and/or Molecular Diagnostic COVID Test Kits, of manufacturer(s) and model(s) duly authorized by an applicable US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)
 - NIOSH-approved N95 masks
 - ASTM F2100 and/or F3502 masks
 - All of the contracts are now available on the [BGS OPC Medical Contracts webpage](#) , but **please note that Concordance Healthcare Solutions does not have provisions allowing their use by political subdivisions and cannot be utilized by towns.**
- Emergency services can still order KN95 masks via the order form https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=O500IK26PEOcAnDtzHVZxnYHsES1qh9Hs2EGYmw_c2tBURDVPSDJS1hUTzdJMFixVDZHQ1JHS1cxViQIQCNOPWcu
- The SEOC is also continuing to provide masks to schools, childcares, Critical Infrastructure, and economic hubs.
- **Hospital Operations Support**
 - **Staffing support**
 - Many hospitals are using the state contract for nursing support.
 - The National Guard has approximately 44 staff deployed to several hospitals, and we continue to assess the daily and weekly needs of hospitals as it relates to COVID-19. As staffing shortages are reduced and there are less COVID-19 patients in the hospitals, we expect that need for support will decline.

IV. Questions from Call Participants

- **Will free test kits be made available to communities for distribution/use?** Not at this time. The government can't compete with the private sector, and this is a reimbursable cost for eligible applicants under the Public Assistance Program, so that should be the method folks are using. As Dan noted earlier, it is possible in the future we could respond with testing capability to avoid operational disruption when staffing issues threatened critical services.

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- **To follow up with your idea of providing training of when to use an antigen test, could you stage a cache of kits by region (ie a single department) that could serve an area, rather than just issuing them to each agency? That way they could be used in a more focused manner that aligns with the training program and the kits might not sit on a shelf and expire, etc.** The answer is maybe. We are still working out the details on this project so right now everything is on the table. Our goal is to target organizations in crisis and not have broad distribution in these. We're still working on the details and there is a lot to consider.
- **Were you able to determine the breakdown of Delta/Omicron hospitalized patients?** I will look into it today and have a better answer next week (or sooner if you'd like to email me).
- **To follow up my comment from last week and suggestion to track turn around time from distribution of masks to when they are actually implemented. Just for your knowledge teachers in Rutland City have not been provided masks to date. Rutland City Public Schools is the Supervisory Union, Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union also have not distributed masks to teachers.** We followed up with the warehouse and can confirm that masks were shipped to these supervisory unions on Wednesday 2/9/2022.