

# 1/20/22 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, EMDs, RPCs, and municipal 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](http://vem.vermont.gov/covid19firstresponders).
- 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.
- 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.

### AGENDA:

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

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

- **Overall update on COVID-19 in Vermont**
  - As of 1/19/22 there have been a total of 93,492 cases of COVID-19 in Vermont. There has been a 56% increase in cases over the past two weeks
  - There has been a total of 507 deaths from COVID-19 in Vermont.
  - 59% of hospitalization have been unvaccinated individuals and 60% are unvaccinated in ICU.
  - There has been a 14% decrease in average daily case count.
  - Modeling is showing that those areas that saw early omicron outbreaks are now passing the peak, which is a good sign for the future in places like Vermont.
  - The highest rates of cases are amongst those who are unvaccinated, and case rate has increased amongst those who are not vaccinated.
  - Vermont recently broke numbers for hospital admissions.
  - More COVID-19 statistics are available on the [Department of Health's website](http://Department of Health's website).
- **Testing Updates**
  - So far we have distributed 1.2 million take home tests.
  - Order take home tests here: <https://www.covidtests.gov/>
  - More information on testing available here: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/testing>
- **Vaccination updates**
  - You are best protected if you are fully vaccinated including a booster.
  - Vaccine appointments can be made by visiting the [Vermont Department of Health website](http://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](http://Department of Health's website).

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

- **SEOC status:** The SEOC is partially activated every weekday from 0800 until 1600. On weekends the SEOC is in monitoring status, meaning the watch officer is the point of contact for any resource needs that arise. The SEOC is entirely virtual.

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- **Main Objectives of this Activation:** The main objective of this activation is to support resource coordination for the response to the Omicron surge. Main areas of operation will be to plan and coordinate new distribution efforts for testing supplies and PPE, addressing federal resource requests, hospital staffing, alternate care site operation and management (if activated), public information support, hospital wrap-around services, critical infrastructure staffing shortages, and information sharing and common operational picture.
  - **SEOC Partners:** SEOC partners include Agency of Digital Services (ADS), and Agency of Education (AOE), Vermont National Guard – Hospital and Logistics, Agency of Human Services (AHS), Vermont Department of Health (VDH), and Medical Operations Network, Agency of Transportation (AOT), Buildings and General Services (BGS), and SerVermont.
  - **FEMA Update:** FEMA has extended the COVID-19 Public Assistance incident period through 4/1/22 at 100% federal share for eligible COVID-19 response costs. Municipalities and non-profits that have submitted costs in the past should consider whether they have at least \$3,300 of additional un-reimbursed COVID-19 costs (e.g. PPE, Plexiglas barrier installations) to submit. For those that have never submitted costs to FEMA for the COVID-19 incident, it is not too late to submit costs dating all the way back to January 2020. If you have questions about whether to submit or how to submit costs for FEMA reimbursement, contact Public Assistance Officer Kim Canarecci at [kim.canarecci@vermont.gov](mailto:kim.canarecci@vermont.gov).
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### IV. Questions from Call Participants

- **"Would it be possible to get 30 N-95 masks for local election official volunteers for Town Meeting Day March 1, 2022?"** Medical countermeasures warehouse is still active. Please use the following form for PPE requests: <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=0500IK26PEOcAnDtzHVZxnYHsES1qh9Hs2EGYmwc2tBURDVPsDJS1hUTzdJMFIXVDZHQ1JHS1cxViQIQCN0PWcu>
- **Do you have a breakdown of the percentage of the Delta and Omicron variants for the current numbers?** As of last week, our EPI division noted that omicron represented more than 85% of all cases.
- **How are we getting any COVID positive results from the 1.2M take home tests?** Take home tests represent a challenge for data collection. We know that our daily counts are likely underreported as a result of persons using them but not reporting. Kits do have instructions on how to report results, and we encourage folks to share those test results. Report test results here: <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6507748/Vermont-COVID-19-Self-Test-Result-Reporting-Form>
- **What is the plan to keep tests that are being mailed out by USPS....from freezing? Most tests must be kept above 32 degrees Fahrenheit.** Cold mailboxes are a challenge. The good news is that the manufacturers tell us that a frozen kit does not impact its usability as long as it is brought to room temperature before use. There is a control line that the instructions ask you to visualize as you set the kit up for use. As long as that line is visible, the kit is ok.
- **CDC website states 60% of N95 or KN95 are counterfeit and ineffective in protecting against COVID. Do you have an FDA approved resource for municipalities to purchase masks?** A true N95 mask is niosh tested and will have a niosh mark in the corner of the mask. KN95 masks make a lot of sense for many people. They may not give the same degree of fit and protection as a true N95. The most important thing is that you wear it, and you feel comfortable wearing it.
- **Why doesn't the state feel that community spread through the schools is not an important factor in elevating the demands on our health care system?** There is definite community spread everywhere including school children. Kids in school under 18 represent a large proportion of cases being reported. The priority is to ensure

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our kids have as much continuity in their school lives as possible. We are using whatever tools are available to ensure uninterrupted school days. The state is working to make sure the consistent guidance and resources needed are available for schools. Resources are being prioritized for schools including 80000 test kits a week for schools.

- ***Can you clarify if the spike in hospitalizations is due directly to complications from COVID or if patients are coming to the hospital for other illnesses and then testing positive for COVID as well?*** We have limited data on this, and reporting additional data is difficult for hospital staff given existing data reporting requirements. A patient admitted to the hospital for non-COVID related reasons will need additional resources allocated to them if they test positive for COVID-19.
- ***Are the deaths that are occurring at DHMC (in NH) but are VT residents being counted?*** If they are Vermont residents then they are counted in the Vermont death rate no matter what state the person was in.
- ***Are the resources you mention that are available to schools being sent automatically? Our district (EWSD) doesn't have sufficient resources or staff to test kids. They have numerous cases a day.*** There is an ordering system for schools to order supplies needed.
- ***Could we get more guidance specifically for Town Meeting and elections?*** We will get VLCT on the call next week.