

## 4/29/21 Municipal & First Responder Call Notes

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

- Welcome participants on the call.
- This is the biweekly call for first responders, EMDs, RPCs, and municipal officials.
- We are hosting this call every other week. The next call will be on Thursday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. The invitation will go out on Monday, May 10<sup>th</sup>.
- The meeting invitations include a link to a survey we use to guide our talking points. The survey will only capture one question per response. To ask multiple questions, fill out the survey multiple times. The survey link will not change week to week.
- On today's call we will be joined by DEPRIP Director Dan Batsie. In addition, we have Vermont State Police Lieutenant Matthew Amadon, Fire Academy Chief Pete Lynch, Vermont League of Cities and Towns Public Policy and Advocacy Director Karen Horn and EMS Chief Will Moran available to answer questions. 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.
- Please note, that starting this week we have removed the FAQs page from the VEM website as we move towards more universal guidance. COVID-19 resources can still be found on the [VEM homepage](#) and in the [Vermont Forward Plan](#).
- Call notes from these meetings will still be posted at [vem.vermont.gov/covid19firstresponders](http://vem.vermont.gov/covid19firstresponders).

#### 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**
  - There have been a total of 22,824 cases of COVID-19 within Vermont. This includes 98 new cases in the last 24 hours and 499 new cases in the last week, which is significantly down compared to two weeks ago.
  - New case counts have decreased across every age group including significant decreases in 10-19 year olds.
  - There have been 246 deaths from COVID-19 including 21 in the last 30 days.
  - There are currently 18 people hospitalized with COVID-19 including 7 in the ICU and 2 on ventilators.
  - More COVID-19 statistics are available on the [Department of Health's website](#).
- **Update on outbreaks and situations**
  - There is a steady decline in the number of outbreaks within the state. The current number of outbreaks is the lowest that the state has seen in 2021.
- **Testing/tracing updates**
  - COVID-19 testing is still a high priority. There are appointments available across the state. For more information on testing [visit the Department of Health's website](#).
  - We received a question in regard to testing homebound Vermonters. Homebound Vermonters should contact their Primary Care Provider (PCP) to consult on receiving an at home test.
- **Vaccination updates**
  - The state has reached the projected target of having 50-60% of all Vermonters having received at least one dose of vaccine by May 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - At week 11 of vaccination, 332,084 have started vaccination with 229,800 having finished. This accounts for 60.7% of those eligible having received vaccination.
  - Vermont leads the country in the percentage of people 65+ being vaccinated. The state is second in doses administered and second in vaccinated older and more vulnerable populations.

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- Around 43% of Vermonters age 18-23 are registered or vaccinated. 54% of Vermonters who identify as Black, Indigenous, or a person of color (BIPOC) have registered or received at least one dose of the vaccine.
  - Vermont has resumed administration of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine following recommendation by the CDC and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
  - The state saw a 3% decline in vaccination rates last week. The country saw a 9% nationwide decline in vaccination rates.
  - All Vermont residents age 16 and older are eligible to be vaccinated.
  - Today, vaccine registration opened to college students who are residents of another state and do not intend to stay in Vermont for the summer, boarding students, and people who live part of the year in Vermont. Appointments can be made on 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](#).
- **EMS updates**
    - Training guidance will get updated and will reflect and align with universal guidance set forth in the [Vermont Forward Plan](#). This will be out soon and reflect additional guidance and plans that are actively being adjusted.
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### III. SEOC Overview/VEM Comments: VEM Director Erica Bornemann

- **SEOC status:**
  - The SEOC remains 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.
  - The SEOC continues to support Vermont's vaccination campaign, especially as the state's vaccine allocation increases. The SEOC is helping the Department of Health locate vaccination sites and coordinate other logistics. The SEOC is also working on disaster cost recovery and medical logistics.
  - The SEOC helped to support the successful drive-in clinic in Barton. The SEOC will continue to support additional clinics in the future.
- **Recent policy changes:**
  - Step 2 of the Vermont Forward plan is expected to begin on May 1<sup>st</sup> and will impact business operations and gatherings and events.
    - [Business Operations](#): Longer duration or close contact businesses will move from sector-specific guidance to universal guidance.
    - [Gatherings and Events](#): For indoor events, 1 unvaccinated person per 100 sq ft up to 150, plus any number of vaccinated people may attend. For outdoor events, the limit is 300 people, plus any number of vaccinated people.
    - We did receive a question in regard to guidance for these types of large gatherings and public events like parades. There is no expected specific guidance for parades, but they will fall under large event guidance. We encourage entities to follow the [Vermont Forward Plan](#) and follow the guidance that is in place at the time of the event.
  - Last week, the Agency of Education released [End of School Year Gatherings and Graduations](#) guidance. It outlined that end of school year celebratory gatherings and graduations are encouraged, and should be held in a manner consistent with both the [Strong and Healthy Year Guidance](#) and the Gatherings and Events provisions of the [Vermont Forward Plan](#).

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- Guidance for [Overnight Summer Camp Operations](#) was also released last week. This guidance will become effective June 1<sup>st</sup>, and is for summer overnight camps only. Municipally run or school-based summer day camps, or privately run day camps, should follow childcare and Out of School Time guidance. Revised guidance under the [Out-of-School-Time Care guidance](#) has been issued and will become effective May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the Small Business Administration are encouraging Vermont restaurants, brew pubs, food trucks, coffee shops, bars and all other potential applicants to look at the [Restaurant Revitalization Fund \(RRF\)](#). These funds will provide restaurants with funding equal to their pandemic-related revenue loss up to \$10 million per business and no more than \$5 million per physical location.
- The Department of Housing and Community Development is accepting applications from Vermont municipalities for [Community Development Block Grant CARES Act](#) funding through the Municipal Public Facility and Service Program for COVID-related activities. Nearly \$1.8 million remains to assist communities and non-profits with grants for public facility and service projects that have unmet needs due to COVID-19.
- On Tuesday, [the Department of Labor](#) announced that the work search requirement for unemployment claimants will be reinstated beginning Sunday, May 9, 2021. Claimants will be required to conduct three qualified job contacts for each week they claim unemployment insurance.
- We received a couple of questions on mask wearing both at work and in large gatherings. The mask mandate is currently still in effect per the Governor's executive order, so individuals should continue to follow that mandate. The CDC did release [updated guidance](#) regarding mask wearing on April 27<sup>th</sup>. It can be expected that new guidance related to mask wearing will be released by the state in the very near future.
  - Additional guidance on mask wearing in certain situations for Fire Departments and EMS agencies can be found on the [Division of Fire Safety website](#).
- On our next call, we do expect to have updated information and guidance on FEMA Cost Recovery funds. Recovery and Mitigation Section Chief, Ben Rose, will plan to join us on the next call to provide you with any new information that we receive.

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### IV. Questions for Call Participants

- ***How is the homeless vaccination program progressing?*** There are specific General Assistance housing clinics ongoing and planned. There are other initiatives in the works and an update with more information will be provided at our next call.
- ***Is there specific guidance for first responders in regards to mask wearing?*** Additional guidance on mask wearing in certain situations for Fire Departments and EMS agencies can be found on the [Division of Fire Safety website](#). In general, if departments are fully vaccinated with the exception of one additional non vaccinated individual the following apply in classroom based training, meetings, outdoor training, and work details:
  - No limit is placed on the number of individuals that may participate (providing that the number remains within the capacity of the room).
  - No face-coverings are required for vaccinated populations inside areas of stations that are closed to the public. However, if the public can freely enter the space, masks are still required. PPE requirements for operational duty have not changed.
  - It is recommended that all individuals maintain adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet when possible.
  - Additional information for departments can be found on the [Division of Fire Safety website](#).
- ***What should someone who is symptomatic, but vaccinated, do?*** First, you should reach out and contact your primary care provider. There have been some cases where vaccinated individuals did get COVID-19. To take precaution, you should consider yourself contagious, stay home, and get tested.