

From: Zehle, Christa H

Sent: Tuesday, December 22, 2020 3:06 PM

Subject: Tuesday's Thoughts

Dear students,

Please find the latest communication from the UVM Medical Center from Monday, December 21, 2020, below.

At this time I do not have any updates on vaccine distribution and as an inpatient pediatric physician on call next weekend, I have yet to hear about when I will be eligible for the vaccine (*note, this was amended with the email posted below*). My understanding is that those responsible for vaccine distribution operations are doing the best they can with the task they have been given and have asked for our patience as they identify vaccine prioritization. I was informed that they would need students to help administer the vaccine and I have asked that volunteer opportunities be sent to the LCOMCares Service Corp who can then communicate volunteer opportunities to students. Medical students in areas with higher COVID-19 rates, including CT and at HHHN, (additional information to be provided by CT campus and LIC leadership) may have an opportunity to receive the vaccine in the next few weeks and we encourage them to do so.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Wishing you a relaxing winter vacation and all the best in 2021!

With appreciation and gratitude,

Christa Zehle

Tuesday's Thoughts Attachments:

- [UVMHN COVID-19 Scorecard](#)
- [News Briefing - Covid-19: New coronavirus variant is identified in UK](#)

Hi.

Days will be longer tomorrow – literally.

Days will be brighter tomorrow – figuratively...☺

UVMHC:

- 10 COVID+/0 PUI – none in ICU
- Network today 29 COVID+/4 PUI
- Med-Surg beds and Class 1 Tele beds are tight – 9 patients waiting for beds in ED as of 3:05PM.
- ICU census remains high.
- 9 COVID+ employees. # of employees exposed whom we are following has decreased by approx. 30%
- Nearly 1000 UVMHC employees will have been vaccinated by tomorrow.

Local community status:

- **Elderwood:** COVID+ staff and residents have “graduated” status and no new positives, more stable overall with improved staffing and educational support. They will be conducting an “occupancy assessment for shared spaces there this week.
- **Birchwood:** closed for admissions until 12/30 and remained negative with continued testing.
- **Our Lady of Providence Assisted Living :** additional positive cases during weekend. Partnering with Winooski Fire Department for Incident Command, received PPE shipment, and staffing is now stabilized.

PPE:

- **Please do not throw away N95s** – at the end of your shift, they should be placed in a designated bin for future reprocessing and reuse.

Vaccines in general:

- Nearly 1000 UVMHC employees will have been vaccinated by tomorrow.

Vaccines for “Community” Providers:

- We are getting there, but it is not going to be perfect.
- The vaccination operations have been split in order to decrease the number of folks entering UVMHC: we will be using the Essex Fairgrounds to vaccinate non-UVMHC employed healthcare workers in the Burlington HSA.
- That process is overseen by Dr. Howard Schapiro and his team.
- So you know, there are approx. 15,000 people – likely more - who fall into the broad category of “*Community Health Care Workers*”, in Chittenden County.
- Dr. Schapiro and his team have built an efficient process and a way to schedule, vaccinate and document.
- We (collectively) do not have clear visibility on the number of vaccines expected to be delivered week over week – that is what makes the scheduling “challenging”.
- We have generated lists of UVMHC “community” providers: a) Active privileges at UVMHC, b) Affiliates privileges at UVMHC.
- We have also generated a list of “community” providers who may be working at UVMHC, but who are primarily employed by another institution, while not being in a private practice.
- We have given those lists to Dr. Schapiro’s team.
- If you are in this category of providers, you will be contacted. Your vaccine will be prioritized and scheduled at the Essex Fairgrounds.
- All those of you who have emailed me and who have privileges at UVMHC are on the list I have sent forward.
- In all transparency, I have exercised a prioritization recommendation within those lists, based on a) type of privileges at UVMHC and related in-house functions, b) type of work in the community or c) HAN prioritization guidance on different specialties, since I know there will not be enough vaccine allocated right off.
- Although you – individually - may be prioritized because of a) type of privileges at UVMHC and related in-house functions, b) type of work in the community or c) HAN prioritization guidance on different specialties, your employees (if they are not also privileged at UVMHC) are not going to be immediately included right off.

On Mutations:

- The only “literature” found by Dr. Cindy Noyes is attached.
- Bottom line – from Dr. Cindy Noyes:
 - Mutations are expected (very common with RNA viruses, they are sloppy not unlike HIV)—mutations noted here are in the spike protein.
 - There have already been multiple mutations identified in different countries, reflecting natural evolution of the RNA nature of this virus.
 - Clinical significance is uncertain, may be more transmissible, but may not necessarily cause more severe disease.
 - Mutations not expected to negate effect of the vaccine.
 - Mutations should not affect diagnostic testing (test for other targets).

Jupiter and Saturn are lining up as I write this message and a meteor shower will occur tonight!

Hoping that the next pandemic will also occur only again in 400 years.

In the meantime, I grin, staring at my new 2020 ornament.

I wish to live to tell the tale of 2020, 20 years from now when unwrapping it, along with all the other symbolic ornaments I have collected year over year...LOL



Happy Holiday.

Thank you so, so much for all you do and for all you give of yourselves.

Isabelle

P.S. : I will take a pass on another message for this week, and I will return with my next message next week.

From: Zehle, Christa H

Sent: Tuesday, December 22, 2020 3:24 PM

Subject: FW: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Update

Dear students,

I just received this after hitting send on my previous email (go figure 😊). Please note that students are included under "Health care providers and staff (all classes including students and support personnel)".

With appreciation,

Christa Zehle

From: Dr. Howard Schapiro

Sent: Tuesday, December 22, 2020 3:07 PM

To: Zehle, Christa H

Subject: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Update

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Vaccine Distribution Update

DECEMBER 22, 2020

Dear colleagues,

The arrival of COVID-19 vaccines brings hope of changing the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. The UVM Health Network's vaccination plans are guided by our commitment to provide a safe, efficient and equitable distribution process, and by guidelines from the CDC and the States of New York and Vermont, which is why we are focusing first on front-line caregivers with the highest risk of exposure.

The University of Vermont Medical Center has received its first shipments of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine and is working in partnership with the State of Vermont to vaccinate community health care workers within our hospital service area at the Champlain Valley Expo (the Fairgrounds) in Essex. We expect to begin receiving shipments of the Moderna vaccine, which was approved by the FDA under an Emergency Use Authorization on Friday.

Naturally, you have many questions about the vaccination process. We are working tirelessly to obtain information from the State and pass it on to you as quickly as we can. Please read through the information below carefully. It likely leaves questions unanswered, but it is all we know right now. If you would still like to contact someone with your questions after review of this information, reply to this email or reach out to [Howard Schapiro](#).

Here is what we currently know:

Right now, there is no action you need to take to schedule yourself or your staff for vaccination. There is no sign up or waiting list. As the UVM Medical Center receives further guidance from the State, we will reach out to the employers of state-

identified community health care workers or practices to schedule vaccinations at the Champlain Valley Expo.

Below, we've detailed the guidance that we've received from the state so far on priority groups for vaccination. We do not yet know how much of the vaccine we will receive and how often. We are in constant communication with the State and will keep you as updated as possible.

All prioritizations of community health care workers are being decided and developed by the State of Vermont. On December 8, we received the following allocation guidance from the Vermont Department of Health for the first three weeks (percentages are of the total number of identified staff, not the amount of available vaccine):

- Week 1: 13% patient-facing hospital staff, 33% of EMS
- Week 2: 33% patient-facing hospital staff, 33% EMS, 3.5% Home Health
- Week 3: 24% patient-facing hospital staff, 33% EMS, 10% Home Health, 12% non-hospital HCWs

On Friday, December 18, the State provided additional priorities for the initial phase of the COVID-19 vaccination program. We do not yet know the recommended allocation (or target percentages) for these priority groups:

- Health care personnel – clinical staff members, including nursing or medical assistants, and support staff (e.g., those who work in food, environmental, and administrative services).
- Residents of long-term care facilities (LTCFs), including skilled nursing facilities, nursing homes and assisted living facilities (vaccination may be offered first to residents and health care personnel in skilled nursing facilities because of high medical acuity and COVID-19-associated mortality among residents in these settings) – vaccination administration for this group will be done by pharmacies designated by the federal government, in partnership with the State of Vermont.

The Vermont Vaccine Implementation Advisory Committee further specified that, in Vermont, “health care personnel” includes:

- Long-term care staff who have direct patient contact.
- Health care providers and staff (all classes including students and support personnel), primarily but not exclusively located in the Emergency Department and Intensive Care Units, providing care to patients with COVID-19.
- Emergency Medical Services personnel with direct patient contact.
- Home health care clinical staff and caregivers who have contact with multiple patients or who are high-risk for serious illness from COVID-19.
- Any other health care providers and staff who have patient contact.

- The definition of staff includes all health care providers who enter the facility, regardless of who employs them, as well as ancillary staff.

The Health Department recommends that individuals in the first tier should include:

- Health care providers and staff working in primary care, obstetrics and gynecology or dental practices.
- Individuals working in Emergency Departments and inpatient settings with direct patient care who may not be employed by the hospital

To prepare for when we contact you, please begin prioritizing your practice. We will be looking for employee name (including middle name), date of birth, address, and phone number to begin scheduling vaccinations. Please be aware that right now, there will not be enough vaccines for every employee at every clinic or practice, so it is important to have your list ready for when we reach out to schedule vaccination appointments.

Information and guidance from the state is changing rapidly, so please be patient with us as we work through this complex process.

Thank you,

Howard Schapiro, MD
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