

From: LCOM Office of the Dean

Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2020 4:11 PM

Subject: On Behalf of Dean Page ~ UVM Takes Part in COVID-19 Vaccine Trial

Dear Larner Community,

Earlier today, at Governor Scott's press conference, it was announced that the UVM Medical Center and our Vaccine Testing Center (VTC) have been selected to participate in the Phase 3 clinical trial for the Oxford University-developed COVID-19 vaccine manufactured by AstraZeneca -- part of the nationwide trial that involves approximately 30,000 volunteers.

This is wonderful news for our community, and an affirmation of the important vaccine-related expertise that has been developed at the VTC by Dr. Beth Kirkpatrick, Director of the VTC and Chair of the Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, and her colleagues.

This is a clinical trial, and so we cannot know for sure what the outcome will be, but it is the next best step to dealing successfully with the current pandemic, and we can all be very proud that our community is a part of this effort.

Dr. John Brumsted, President and CEO of the UVM Health Network, released the statement copied below after the announcement. This project underscores the importance of our relationship with our clinical partner institution. As Dr. Brumsted notes, providing this trial to Vermont exemplifies the great value provided by the partnership of the UVM Health Network, Medical Center, and the UVM Larner College of Medicine.

More information about the trial can also be found on our College's website [here](#).

Thank you to all the members of our community who have helped to make participation in this trial a reality.

Before closing, please let me remind all of us to redouble our efforts to mitigate this pandemic. Physical distancing, hand hygiene, and especially the use of masks have never been more important. If we follow the CDC, Vermont Department of Health, and UVM Strong guidelines, we have the best chance of staying healthy while we await the vaccine that we all hope will be approved soon.

Stay well,

Rick

Richard L. Page, M.D.
Dean

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Dear Colleagues:

Our health network has played a vital role in the region's response to COVID-19, both in terms of caring for those who've fallen ill and preventing the spread of this virus. So I'm proud to announce today that UVM Medical Center and the Vaccine Testing Center at UVM Larner College of Medicine have been selected to participate in a Phase 3 trial for a COVID-19 vaccine developed by Oxford University and manufactured by AstraZeneca. This is a two-year trial that will include at least 250 people from our region and about 30,000 nationwide.

While we must continue to do all we can to slow the spread of COVID-19 via handwashing, masking and distancing, the development of an effective vaccine will represent a giant leap forward in the fight against this terrible illness. Put simply, it will save many lives. As such, any work we can do to further vaccine development represents the highest calling and aspiration in the field of health care.

Since March, when COVID-19 began to spread in our region, we've stood up robust treatment facilities, boosted testing capacity and adapted our operations to offer as many services as we could, as safely as we could. We've also been active in educating the public about COVID-19, and we're making preparations network-wide for possible future surges of this disease. So our participation in this trial is a natural extension of our ongoing pandemic work. It is a privilege to be part of a vaccine-development process that, if successful, could result in an effective tool to blunt the impact of this pandemic – both here and around the world.

As you may have heard, this particular study, as well as another of the Phase 3 trials (Johnson & Johnson), had been temporarily stopped to review specific symptoms in one of the volunteers in each of the studies. For AstraZeneca, the FDA as well as an independent group of experts have completed an extremely comprehensive and detailed review of all of the participants in this work with the intention of understanding if the symptom was linked to the vaccine. Ultimately, the FDA and the independent review group concluded that the AstraZeneca study was safe to proceed. It will start enrollment again this week.

Participation in this trial highlights the tremendous regional value of our academic mission, as well as the strength of our entire network. Our affiliates will have an important role to play, as many patients across our network may be participating. Additionally, this trial will build on a strong track record of vaccine research. UVM's Vaccine Testing Center has been doing this work for two decades and has studied vaccines for Dengue, Cholera, Campylobacter, Cholera, Typhoid, Anthrax, West Nile Virus and Zika. The center has an international reach and a commitment to tackling the world's toughest infectious disease issues.

The bottom line is, we all have a stake in this critical initiative. And we have the expertise and the experience to be able to contribute meaningfully, safely and effectively to this work.

For more information about this trial, you can visit UVMHealth.org/COVIDStudy. We'll be talking to our communities much more about this effort in the coming weeks and months, and we'll be recruiting volunteers to participate. To all of those volunteers, all of the researchers and everyone involved in this vaccine trial: We thank you, we support you and we're cheering you on.

Sincerely,
John
John R. Brumsted, M.D.