

Town of Middlebury  
Emergency Management Bulletin  
February 12, 2021

**New Age Band Launched**

Tuesday, February 16, registration opens for those age 70+. Get a jump on registration by opening your account with VDH and getting an account number. You can do that now, but can't register for the vaccine until Tuesday. So far, 85% of the 75+ age group are either already vaccinated or are registered and scheduled for their vaccine. Walk-ins cannot be accommodated, you must be registered. Register for the vaccination site nearest your home. AHS is distributing vaccines based on population distribution.

Dr Fauci reports that he expects the vaccine to be accessible to the general public by mid-late April. Another reason to get your VDH account number. Pfizer vaccine manufacture has increased, Johnson and Johnson is expected to get approved in the coming weeks, and allotments to Vermont are increasing.

**Music Programs to Start Opening Up in Schools**

Guidelines are expected to be released next week, but here are some of the anticipated guidelines: Musicians must maintain a 6' X 6' distance between other musicians; the trombonist must maintain a 6' X 9' distance; for wind instrumentalists- you must wear a mask with a small slit for the mouthpiece, and when not playing you must wear a full mask; there must be bell covers on horns; practices are limited to 30 minutes and no audience is allowed. Stay to the ACCD and DOE websites for specifics when released next week.

**Emergency Order Extension**

As anticipated, the Governor extended the emergency order through March 15. As the most vulnerable get vaccinated, we can expect the spigot to start opening up again.

**Weekly Regional Look at COVID**

Across New England and New York, COVID infection reports dropped. There are still a lot of new infections, but the numbers are diminishing. The number in parenthesis is the change from the prior week.

CT: 9,785 (-1,838); MA: 17,391 (-3,370); ME: 1,670 (-1,393); NH: 2,441 (-771); NY: 60,834 (-15,631); RI: 3,148 (-647); VT: 824 (-88).

**Vaccinations**

As of February 12 over, 70,000 Vermonters have received their first dose of vaccine. 33,000 have received both doses. Reported side effects within 12 hours of vaccine administration are body aches, sore arms, nausea, headaches and a general malaise. These symptoms subside after several hours. It seems that the stronger your immune system is, the more intense the side effects!

### **I'm In A Store And Someone Is In Here Without a Mask**

Yup, that happens. Some people cannot wear a mask for an underlying medical reason. Some people don't wear one because they are not going to let anyone tell them they have to. Some people don't believe COVID is all that real or dangerous. Some people are just careless. So what do you do? Do not contest them. Avoid them and keep your distance. Medical reasons or not, they can still spread COVID-laced aerosols. Keep your distance, protect yourself with hand sanitizer (for YOUR hands, not to be sprayed at them) and your mask. Don't follow them into the checkout line- use a different one. If this seems to be a problem with a certain establishment, you may simply want to reduce your risk and stop going there.

### **Lab Results Indicate Likely Presence of COVID-19 Variant in the State**

The City of Burlington's testing of wastewater has detected the presence of two COVID-19 virus mutations that are associated with the B.1.1.7 variant, first detected in the United Kingdom. Detection of these two mutations is a strong indicator that the B.1.1.7 variant is present in the community.

Wastewater sampling is a pooled sample of many different community members, and only looks for the presence of two specific mutations, so this should not be considered definitive finding of that variant, but it does indicate the variant is most likely present in Vermont. The Health Department will work to confirm the presence of the variant through genetic sequencing of individual samples from COVID-19 positive individuals.

Viruses constantly change through mutation, and new variants of a virus are expected to occur over time. Many emerge and disappear, but others can persist and even become the predominant strain. Some experts anticipate the more easily transmissible B.1.1.7 variant will become widespread throughout the country. According to the CDC, studies so far show the current vaccines are largely effective against this variant. Nonetheless, health experts warn the faster spreading variants can lead to more cases of COVID-19, as well as increased hospitalizations and deaths.

### **Influenza, Where Have You Gone?**

Between the mask wearing and flu vaccines and people following safety protocols, the flu has apparently decided to take the winter off. There has been some, but way below the normal infection load.

We are getting there, folks, it's been a l-o-n-g poke... Just a little bit longer.....