

Town of Middlebury
Emergency Management Bulletin
May 5, 2020

From The Rumor Control Department...

What was happening at the Courtyard today? This was the question being bandied about. The answer is a take-off from yesterday's report on the positive CV-19 test in "Addison County". Again, taking off on Paul Harvey, consider this report "Page 2".

On April 23, a Massachusetts man was given an early release from a jail in Massachusetts, released to "The Street" according to the release paperwork. He was driven to Vermont by a friend on the 25th and from there taken to Middlebury. He reported that he had been sleeping outside and was unable to receive assistance through 2-1-1. The person driving him then brought him to the police station where he reported he was homeless, hungry, and needed shelter. With no apparent options available, Charter House Shelter staff arranged to intake him at the Marriott. The Agency of Human Services later provided transport for him to Harbor Place in So. Burlington for quarantine. He was tested there a few days later and found to be infected with CV-19.

So the VDH mobile lab staff was at Marriott today testing everyone there as part of contact tracing and stopping the spread. Internal controls at the Marriott were and are ahead of the game by aggressive housekeeping and disinfectant practices which will minimize the risk.

The person who drove the man to Middlebury has been notified that he's been exposed to the virus. VDH has his information. The police have updated their policies with respect to engaging the homeless at this point, specifically going through a set of interrogatories to determine risk and provide adequate placement.

Confidence is Growing

Five more cases statewide overnight, the percentage of those found to be positive from those tested is still dropping. And still no new cases in Addison County, it's been over 2 weeks (the case above excepted). For those who like Christmas tunes in the off-season, "It's beginning to look a lot [~~like~~ ~~Christmas~~] more normal..." The reports are encouraging. And how about this:

Health care providers that meet specific criteria to protect patients and clinicians from possible infection, can begin non-essential outpatient clinic visits, diagnostic imaging and outpatient surgeries and procedures.

Some examples include:

- A process to screen patients, staff and essential visitors for COVID-19-related symptoms
- Staff must use protective equipment and supplies, and patients and companions must wear mouth and nose coverings when in public areas.
- Patient companions are permitted only if required for direct patient assistance.
- Waiting room chairs must be spaced to require a minimum of six-feet physical distancing.
- Providers must have signage to emphasize social restrictions, access to hand sanitizer, and written procedures for disinfection of common areas.

Providers may also begin to perform outpatient surgeries and procedures that have a minimal impact on inpatient hospital bed capacity and protective equipment levels, including those performed in the office or ambulatory surgical center. They must follow additional criteria.

So if that repair for your nagging metatarsus interlocking with your digitalis surgery has been put off, perhaps relief may not be far away!

Town Services

Town Departments are working on plans for some measure of return to service. While no essential town services have been curtailed due to absenteeism from Covid-19, there had been a scaling back. Stay tuned, plans are in the offing to begin restoring some normalcy.

Numbers, Numbers

We know that using pure numbers as a measure of success can be a fallacy. The use of Viet Cong and NVA numbers killed in Vietnam was no more a measure of strategic success than it is to use bulk numbers when considering Covid-19. The only numbers in the pandemic that mean anything are how many people are infected today, this minute, and how many people are infected tomorrow and how many were infected yesterday. How many are currently hospitalized. Those are the true indicators of how widespread (or not) the disease is.

The Vermont total number of infections, 907, means that most of these people are no longer infected. Large numbers make great sensational news to reinforce a sense of tragedy or success. We see the daily hospitalization numbers drop, and we believe the moment –in-time numbers are likewise falling. Riding a bike, the terrain you’ve left behind bears little relevance to the terrain you’re on or the terrain ahead. It’s good to analyze trends, but large, raw numbers serve only to distract one from the issue at hand. They are a point of curiosity.

Another Advantage of “The Mask”

We’ve highlighted all the health benefits of the mask ad nauseum. But you know, it hides wrinkles and age lines, highlights your eyes, and gives you a hint of mystery. Forget “Who’s behind those Foster Grants”, it’s now “Who is behind the mask?”. Wear it well, stay well!