

EMS Leadership Call – March 4, 2021

Licensure - Ray Walker

March is the month for renewing all National Registry certifications with the exception of EMR. Anyone other than EMR needs to get registry renewed by 3/31 and then VT license renewal by 6/30. All CE can currently, be obtained on line (by distributive means). Next year limitations on distributive education will be back in place.

Also, the LIGHTS online licensure system will hopefully go live by the end of the month, but there are a handful of small things that need to be fixed...little things like no paper license cards but will be photo ids...except that the photo sometimes comes in upside down and backward. Can't wait to go live, but don't hold us to the end of the month.

Data Update – Chelsea Dubie

Ray reported that Chelsea is triple booked and had no update.

EMSC – Merrill Pine

The second EMSC case review was held 3/3/21 with about 50 folks in attendance. Unfortunately, the session didn't get recorded. 4/7 at 7 is next one, and a more tech savvy person will be sought to help record it.

Working on new manikins to have available for districts.

Reminder to document PPE use in your SIREN reports for contact tracing. Working on a virtual human trafficking training and ready to begin Peds HPCPR trainings when we start in person trainings again.

Medical Director Update – Dan Wolfson, MD

A newly restructured protocol workgroup is actively working on the 2022 protocol updates. Group is making excellent contributions. Have ideas? Send email, call, send smoke signals.

EMS Training Administrator – Will Moran

We have successfully hired an EMS training administrator. Bambi Dame has been hired from Fairfax Rescue into this position. She's currently working on a master's in education. Hoping for a fresh perspective and a modern outlook. Starting in the office early next month.

Vaccination Campaign – Will Moran

Your agencies have been collecting the names of first responders who would like to receive vaccines over the last couple of months. Once the 3/8 public vaccination period opens up, have your interested members call the MCC (Main Call Center) at 855-722-7878. Ask your staff to identify themselves as a first responder and the person answering the phone will make their appointment. Mike Skaza and Pete Lynch have both done so much work on this project to ensure that all first responders who want to get vaccinated are served. Just wrapping up second vaccinations on many Tier 1A providers now and I greatly appreciate the VT Fire Academy and their staff to ensure that first responders are vaccinated in a timely fashion.

In person training – There are currently no changes to our recommendations around training. But we certainly do have recommendations around in-person trainings that are essential. Recommendation is no more than 10 individuals, wearing a VDH-approved face covering and maintaining sufficient space for social distancing (6 feet apart and maintained throughout training). Provide adequate ventilation, utilizing a larger space if possible (like equipment bays), open a door, and take other steps like that to keep staff safe. These recommendations have had a negative impact on psychomotor training. We understand that. We encourage folks to follow appropriate protocols. But while we aren't pushing through candidates at a rapid rate, we are still educating, and testing for licensure. We hope conditions improve in the coming months and when it's appropriate the recommendations will be updated.

Quarantine recommendations – Individuals greater than 2 weeks out but less than 3 months from their second dose, there's no need to quarantine. That recommendation is for the general public and doesn't apply to those in the healthcare arena. The standing recommendation is healthcare providers (vaccinated or not) if you have had exposure or traveled, you should be excluded from work for up to 14 days or follow quarantine and testing before returning to work. Important to check on guidance for healthcare providers and not just the guidance for the general public. There is not yet sufficient data to determine whether you can transmit the virus. 90% effective from becoming seriously ill. Doesn't mean you won't contract the virus. Important to keep that in mind.

Vaccination efforts – VDH has been actively contracting with fire and EMS agencies to provide vaccinations and we're looking for additional services. Little more than 50 agencies are participating now. Represents an active workforce of about 500 practitioners staffing PODs. Cannot express enough the sacrifice these folks are making on a daily basis vaccinating Vermonters. This effort is not over. Vaccine quantities have increased but we know that to meet the goals, we're going to need to recruit more folks. If your a service hasn't already contracted, and you're interested, reach out to me. I can share the list of other service involved and you are welcome to speak with them. I work closely with staff scheduled to work in public health PODs. EMS is the heavy hitter in the room. We're reliable, we show up, pay attention to detail, and are leaving our mark on this crisis. There are tasks at POD sites that do not require an EMS license, so feel free to include those folks. Even if you have a small group with only some of those folks licensed, feel free to reach out about getting involved. The compensation package is very generous.

Mobile vaccinations – EMS has jumped into this arena to solve the issue of homebound citizens requiring vaccinations. As of last week, more than 1600 homebound individuals have been vaccinated. That number is expect to rise to 2000 by the end of this week. That's substantial, particularly when you consider that the time commitment per visit is approximately 45 min to 1 hour per dose. That's substantial! We should be very proud of our willingness to be problem solvers. But this is no time to relax....plenty of opportunities to get involved.

General EMS work – We received a charge from the legislature last year regarding EMS rule updates and I have been working with staff and the EMS Advisory Committee. On the docket are three different topics for rule change: I/C, EMT testing and VT first responder.

Looking at draft language specific to I/C, we're looking to build I/C out to 3 levels: an entry level, I/C (as it exists now), and then one higher level.

EMT testing – we're looking at opportunities to allow EMS education programs to test out their students without formal psychomotor testing.

Vermont First Responder licensure – This would be a very entry level position. Today entry level is EMR. But because EMR requires NR testing, it at times can be a barrier to get involved. This VT First Responder conceptually is basic first aid training and not intended to replace the EMR level. Hope to recruit more VTers to get involved with EMS response. This may help a service gain drivers in the form of first responders. It'll involve first aid training and will give you the opportunity to serve your community. And the ask will be reasonable. We are currently evaluating curriculum options but we do not intend to create curriculum. Focused on ensuring that it doesn't meet or exceed the EMR curriculum. Reports are expected back to the legislature soon.

Becky Owens – You're putting out a call recruiting more folks for vaccinations but our service has yet to be called to service. Will – we've made some adjustments as to how we schedule services. Working closely with the vaccination staffing group. The staffing group is getting more comfortable scheduling EMS providers. We will be knocking on your door soon.

Scott Crady – larger group trainings...is there a metric we're looking for before we can again hold larger trainings? Will – I don't have that information. You can train in person, just with smaller groups. But there is no solid answer at this point. We'll continue to evaluate recommendations going forward but I can't give you a timeline.

Michaela Foody – How will the first responder course be different from EMR? Currently no one is hosting EMR courses, so how will the same not become of first responder? Will - Currently we are drafting proposed broad language that allows us to develop the VT First responder to be an effective tool in enrolling folks into the EMS system. Not at the point yet where I can address your questions. More to come...

Alex Northern – firefighters not involved with patient care can now get vaccinated? Will – yes. Anyone involved in public safety....treasurer, secretary, auxiliary, etc. If affiliated with your organization, call mcc and schedule an appointment for vaccination. Identify yourself as a first responder.

Gown recommendations? Will – no changes in the guidance. What we have published today still stands.

Liam Knight - I've heard that the rapid antigen tests are being used at long term care facilities. Has there been discussion of having EMS do those? Will – has not come across my radar but if I hear anything, I'll reach out to you.

Will – thanks to all of you for jumping on this call. I'll put an email out tomorrow reflecting what we've discussed today. Be safe and take care.

Adjourned at 11:41.