

Mitigating and Responding to COVID-19 in the Workplace



- **Housekeeping Items**
- **Introductions**
- **State of Vermont Operations Plan Overview**

Secretary Kristin Clouser, Agency of Administration

- **Maintaining a Safe & Healthy Workplace**

Director Steve Monahan, Vermont Department of Labor
Division of Workers' Compensation & Safety

- **Vaccine & Testing Availability**

Deputy Secretary Jenny Samuelson, Agency of Human Services
State of Vermont Epidemiologist, Patsy Kelso, PhD

AGENDA

State Employee Requirement:

State of Vermont employees are required attest to being fully vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus or be subject to regular COVID-19 testing and masking requirements

State of Vermont Experience:
*Employee Vaccination or
COVID-19 Test and Mask
Requirement*

Kristin Clouser
Secretary of Administration

Implementation in 2 Stages: 24 X 7 Facilities and General Employee Population

Stage 1: 24 X 7 Facilities

- Began September 1, 2021
 - 6 Corrections Facilities, 2 residential psychiatric care facilities and the Vermont Veteran's Home
 - Impacted just over 900 employees
 - Attestation forms collected and filed on-site
 - On-site testing availability in workplace
 - Masking protocols in place Little resistance and smooth implementation
- Key Factor in Relatively Smooth Implementation - Employees were used be wearing masks and undergoing covid-19 testing at the worksite

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Implementation in 2 Stages: 24 X 7 Facilities and General Employee Population

Stage 2: General Employee Population

- Effective September 15, 2021
- Impacted approximately 8000 employees

Attestation

- September 15, 2021 - employees began attestation process
- Online form using the state's human resources information system

Masking

- September 20, 2021, unattested employees were required to wear an appropriate facial covering at the worksite

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Worksite Testing

- On September 27, 2021, initial COVID-19 testing kit distribution/collection sites were set up at 20 state employee worksites across the state to provide employees access to testing on or close to their worksite
- Test kit distribution/collection sites were administered by state staff using an existing State contract with a testing vendor
- One day a week, employees pick up a test kit, self-administer the test, register the test online, drop off the test kit at the kit distribution center, state staff mail the test kits to the lab
- Employees are emailed the result of the test and the state is notified whether the employee took the test from the vendor
- By October 4, 2021, additional employee testing kit distribution/collection sites were made available to ensure all employees had a testing distribution center close to their worksite
- Testing is available to all employees regardless of attestation status

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Challenges:

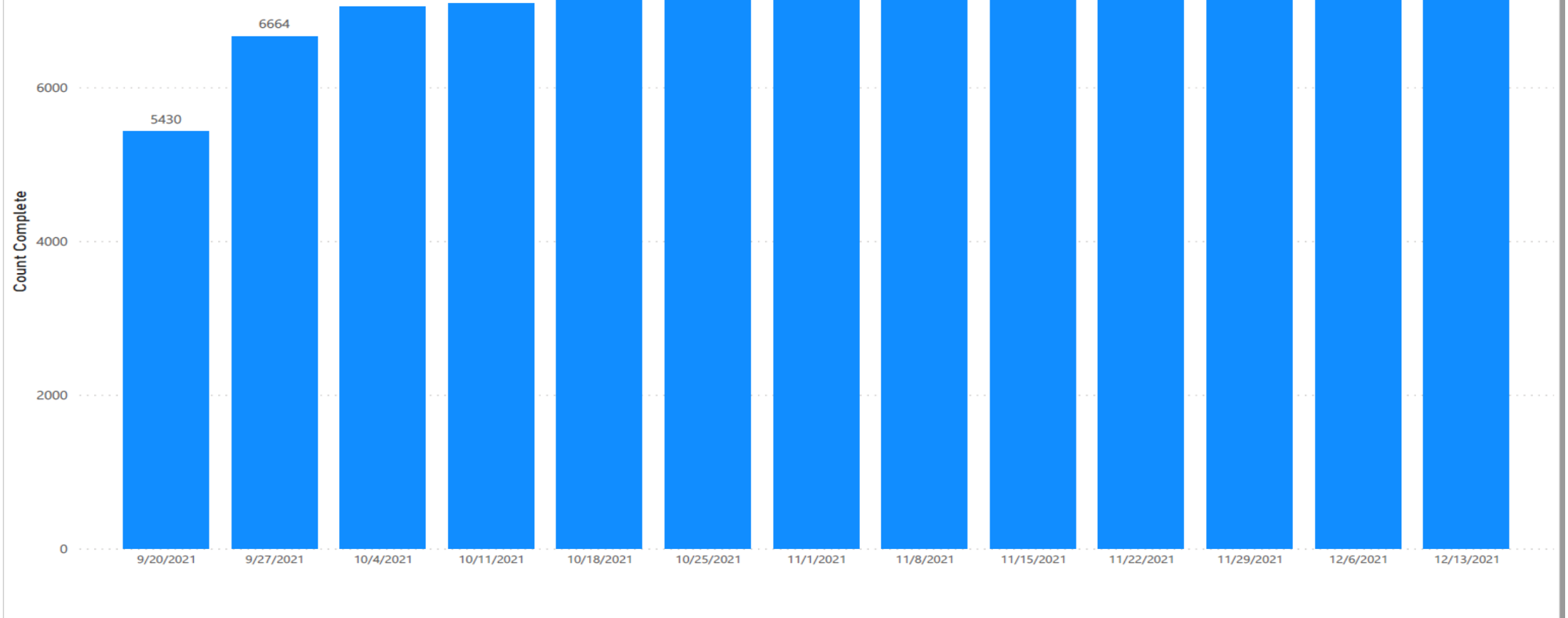
- Size and geographic distribution of the employee population
- Staff time involved in implementation and compliance
- Training and staffing the test distribution/collection centers
- Temporary Employees who were active in the HR System but worked sporadically or were no longer working for the state

Successes:

- 91.9% of employees have attested to being vaccinated
- Employees expressed added feeling of safety when returning to workplace
- Able to adapt our existing systems so that employees could electronically attest to vaccination status and the State could get daily reporting and progress
- FAQs developed and published

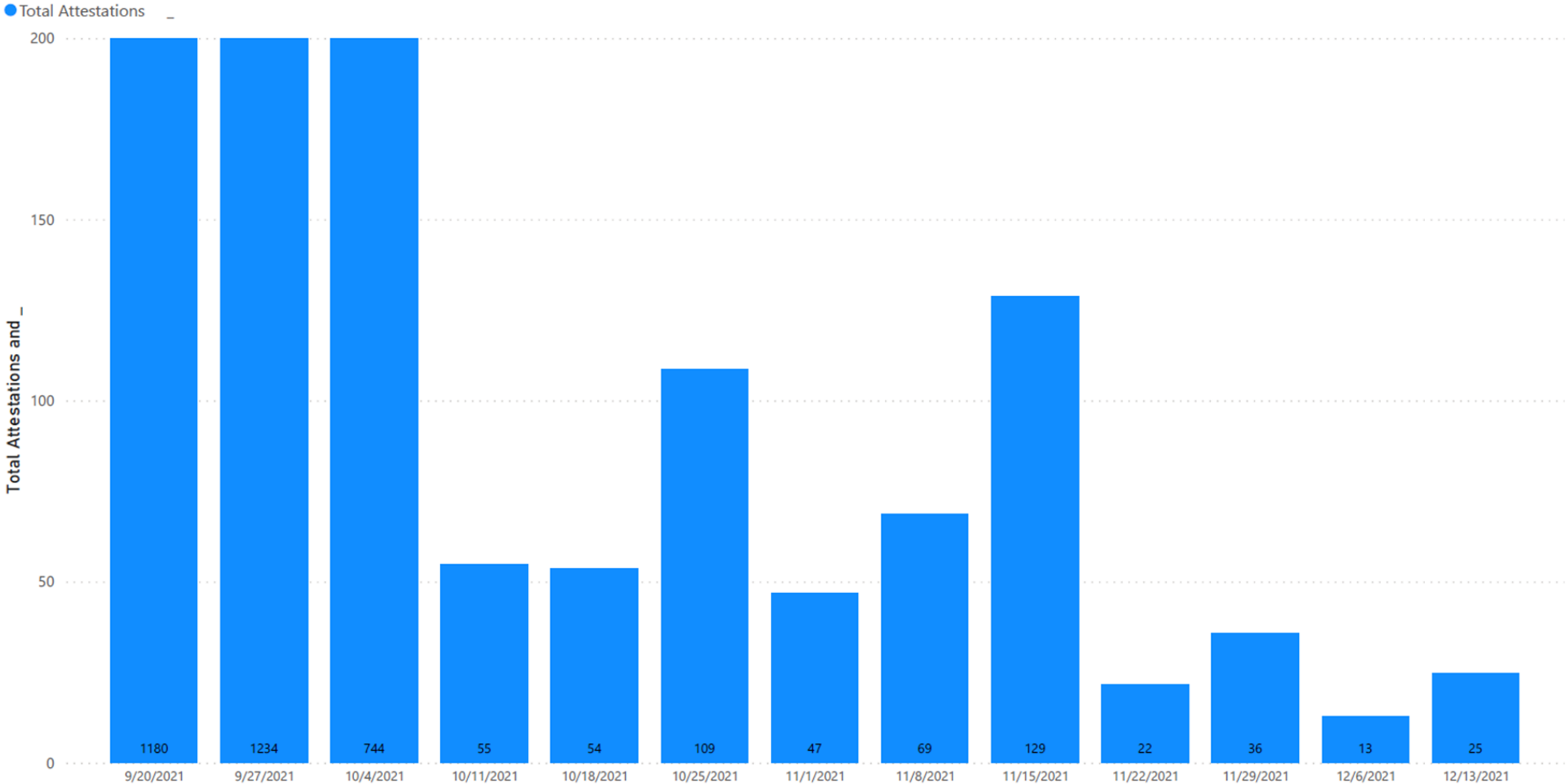
State of Vermont Experience: *Employee Vaccination or COVID-19 Test and Mask Requirement*

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New Attestations Captured Weekly

New Attestations by Date (Weekly)



Considerations for your program:

1. Decide how you will determine vaccination status
 - *Are you going to have the employees show proof of vaccination or attest to being vaccinated?*
 - *How you will track and store employee vaccination information?*
 - *Be careful to keep the information in a secure location to protect employee information*
2. Determine how the tests will be conducted and what tests will be accepted
3. Determine who will be subject to the requirements (i.e. including home-based employees)
4. Decide how will you communicate the timeline and expectations
 - Coordinate with labor partners (if applicable)
5. Review pending OSHA Rule & determine if it applies to you
 - Employers of 100 or more
 - Could inform how you design your program
6. Consult with HR and/or employment law experts to ensure compliance with the law

State of Vermont Experience: *Employee Vaccination or COVID-19 Test and Mask Requirement*

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HEALTH AND SAFETY REMINDERS

- It is easy to get distracted by the implementation of Covid protocols. **Don't forget about the other safety and health standards in your workplace!**
- Staff may have family members and children in the school system that are also trying to mitigate Covid, as well as preparing for the holidays. **Send gentle reminders, often!**
- **REMEMBER:** Distraction and lack of focus can lead to injury both at work and at home. **Reminders are helpful!**
- Consider brief safety stand down/toolbox talk encouraging all workers to act safely at work and home get through the holidays without trips to the hospital.

Maintaining a Safe & Healthy Workplace

Director Steve Monahan
Division of Workers' Compensation and
Safety

CONTACTING Project WorkSAFE

Please note that Department of Labor offices are closed due to COVID-19. If you need to contact VOSHA, please do so by phone or email .

Learning more about workplace hazards and how to prevent them can help you protect your workers from injury and illness. It may even prevent loss of life at your worksite.

CALL for a Free Consultation

Local: (802) 828-2765

Main Telephone: (888) SAFE-YES (888-723-3937)

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Main Phone: 1-800-287-2765

Email: LABOR.WCVOSHA@vermont.gov

Maintaining a Safe & Healthy Workplace

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- COVID-19 Testing is a critical tool for identifying positive cases and preventing spread.
- Finding Free Testing Clinics
- Employers can access free PCR testing (29 testing sites)
- Average turn-around time is 24-48 hours
- **Purchasing Test Kits**
 - Purchase over-the-counter test kits and at-home testing kits
 - How to report test results

Vaccine & Testing Availability

Deputy Secretary Jenny Samuelson
Agency of Human Services

- **How to Find a Testing Clinic**

- **VDH Interactive map** to find State, pharmacy, and other testing clinics
- **VDH Registration Site** to find State testing clinics (appointments filtered by location, date, and time)

- **How to Make a Test Appointment**

- Online through the **VDH registration site**
- **Call VDH** (855-722-7878, Mon-Fri 8:15-4:30, Sat-Sun 10:00-3:00)
- Register online through your **pharmacy website**

Free Testing Availability

Deputy Secretary Jenny Samuelson
Agency of Human Services

Purchasing Over-the-Counter Testing Kits

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Agency of Human Services

- **Pharmacies**
- Over-the-Counter (OTC) Covid 19 Test Kits are currently available at most pharmacies for purchase (Walgreens, CVS, Walmart, Hannaford etc.), as well as online (e.g. Amazon).
- Supply may be limited.
- Some kits come as a box with 2 tests included (BinaxNOW, QuickVue.)



- COVID-19 Antigen Test Kits
- Available at **pharmacies**
- **Covered by insurance** by both commercial payers and Medicaid (without cost sharing)
- Insurance coverage requires a prescription, which may be written by a licensed pharmacist, a licensed prescriber, or pharmacies may use the standing orders they already have in place, or the standing order signed by Dr. Levine.
- Coverage for OTC antigen tests are for home personal use and not resale.
- DFR Emergency Rule H-2021-02-E Forms.docm (vermont.gov)

At-Home COVID-19 Antigen Test Kits

Deputy Secretary Jenny Samuelson
Agency of Human Services

- Report your self-test results to the Health Department
- You can do that by choosing the option to automatically provide your results to your local health department or by filling out the [Vermont COVID-19 Self-Test Result Reporting Form](#).

Reporting Your Test Results

Deputy Secretary Jenny Samuelson
Agency of Human Services

- Vaccines are the best tool for preventing COVID-19 hospitalizations. Encouraging the vaccinated to get their booster shot six months after their initial vaccine series for Moderna and Pfizer or 2 months after their Johnson and Johnson shot is also crucial.
- **Vaccine Clinics**
- Find appointments available statewide (including walk-ins, increasingly available)
- Request a vaccine clinic at your worksite for employees or employees' families
- Offer to host a vaccine clinic to benefit your broader community

Vermont COVID-19 Vaccination

Deputy Secretary Jenny Samuelson
Agency of Human Services

- **How to Find a Vaccine Clinic**

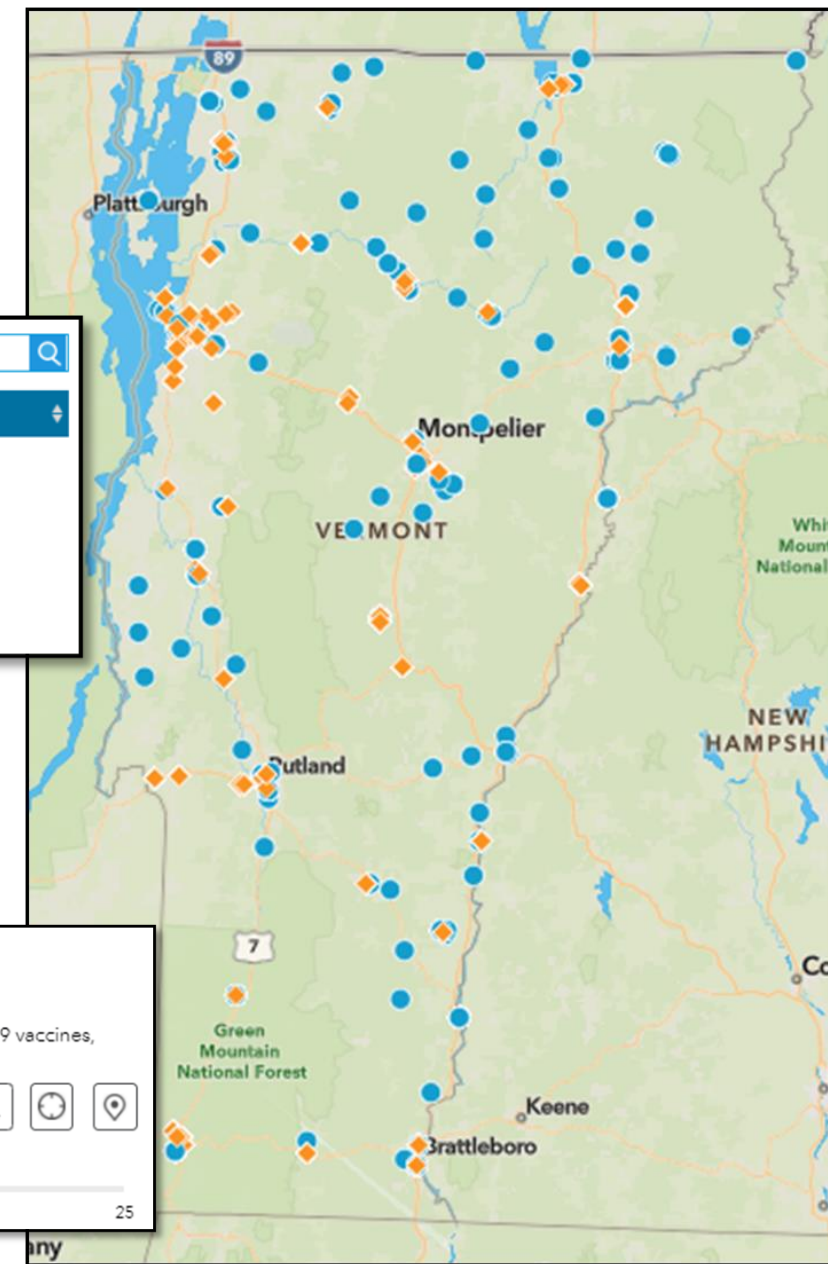
- **VDH Interactive map** to find State, pharmacy, and walk-in clinics
- **VDH Clinic List** (filtered by: date, time, town, and vaccine type)

SEARCH				
DATE	SITE	TIME	TOWN	VACCINE TYPE
12/17/2021	55 Middle Rd. Walk-ins welcome!	1:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Middlebury	Pfizer (Ages 5-11)
12/17/2021	Berlin Mall 282 Berlin Mall Rd. Walk-ins welcome!	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Berlin	Pfizer (Ages 5-11)

- **VDH Registration Site** to find State clinics (appointments filtered by location, date, and time)

- **How to Make a Vaccine Appointment**

- Online through the **VDH registration site**
- **Call VDH** (855-722-7878, Mon-Fri 8:15-4:30, Sat-Sun 10:00-3:00)
- Register online through your **pharmacy website**



- **How to Request a Vaccine Clinic**

- Complete the **Vaccine Clinic Request Form** on the VDH Website
- Work with our clinic coordination team to establish the details for your clinic
- Consider offering a reward for people who choose to get vaccinated at your clinic (e.g., offering the next day off after an employee get their vaccine)
- Promote your clinic!

- **What to Expect (in most cases)**

- A local EMS crew will be the vaccinator at your clinic
- Offering all vaccine types (Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson) for first dose, second dose, or booster, with option to plan to have Pediatric Pfizer available
- 2-4 hour clinic in an open and accessible environment at your work site

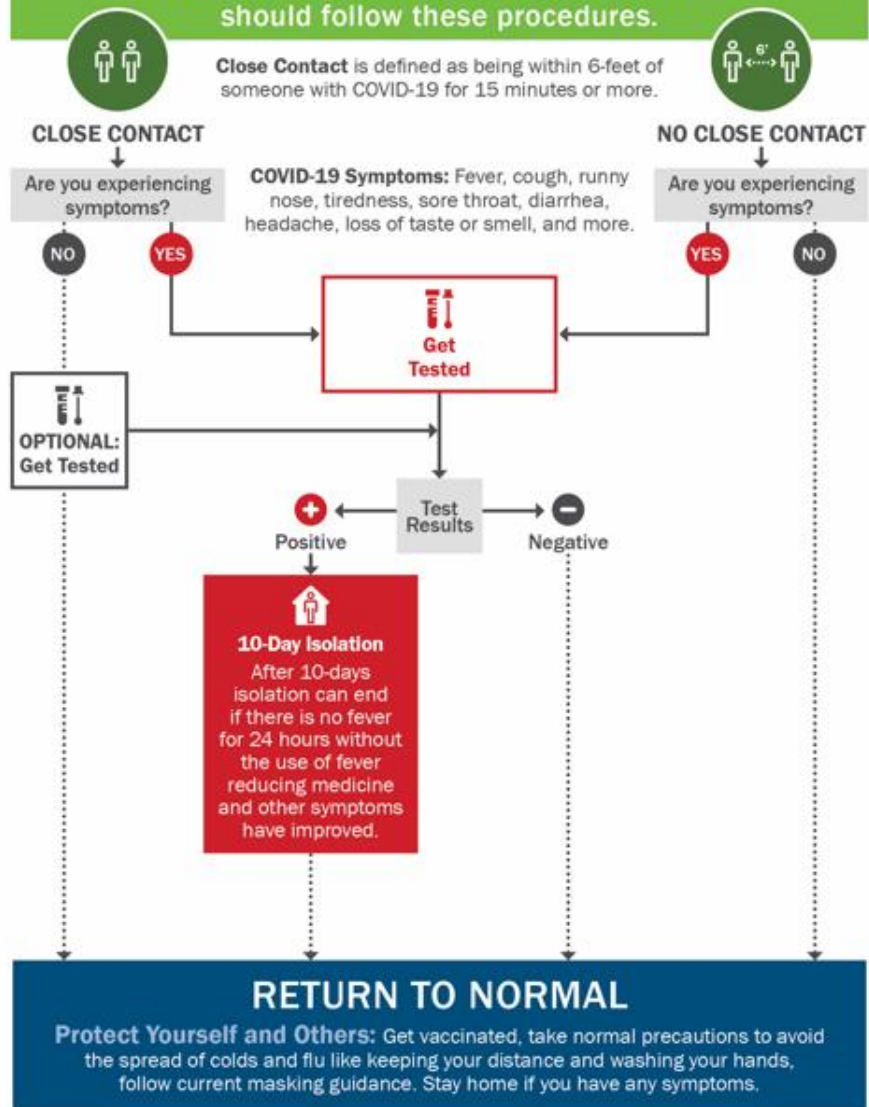
Requesting a Vaccine Clinic

Deputy Secretary Jenny Samuelson
Agency of Human Services

Have you been exposed to COVID-19?

VERMONT
FORWARD

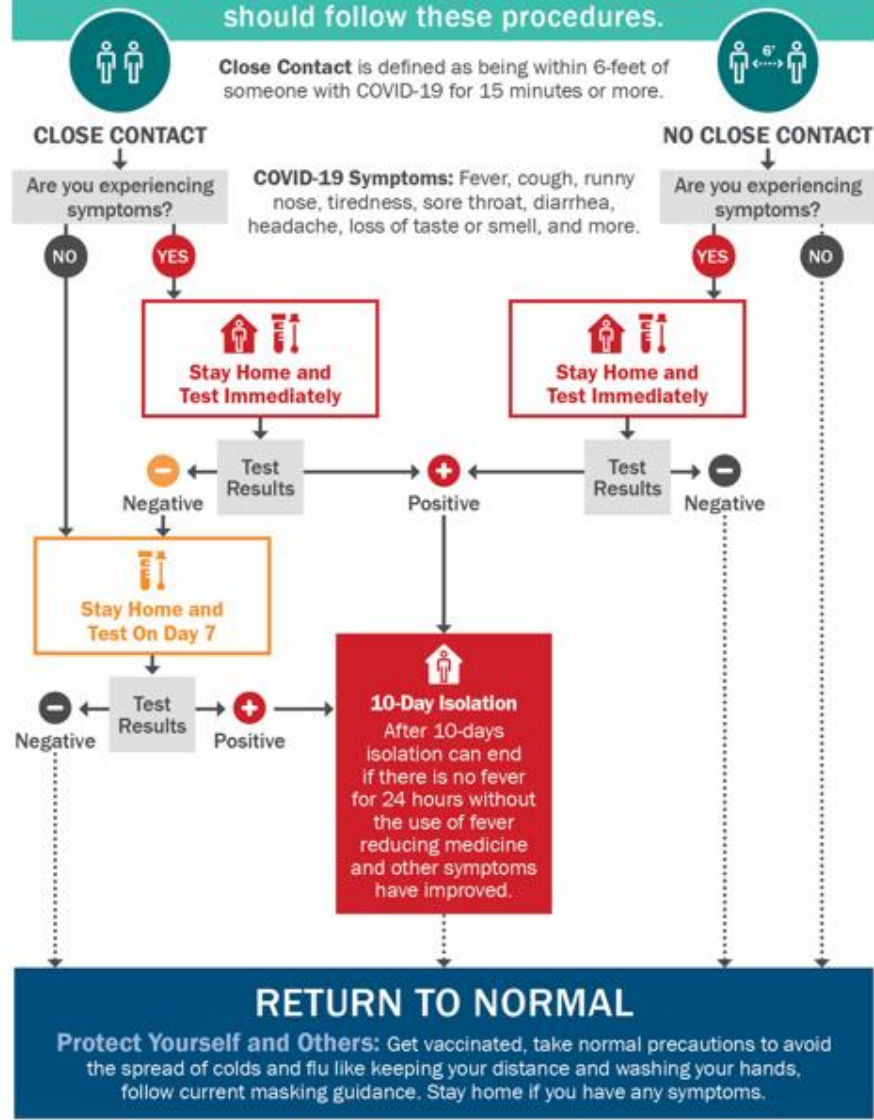
FULLY VACCINATED INDIVIDUALS should follow these procedures.



Have you been exposed to COVID-19?

VERMONT
FORWARD

NOT FULLY VACCINATED INDIVIDUALS should follow these procedures.



- **Vaccines**
- **State's Goal:** to sustain a vaccine system that is easy and consistent
- Employer-requested clinics
- Pop-up clinics at businesses, events, and high-traffic locations
- Ongoing vaccine availability through pharmacies and health care providers



- **Testing**
- **State's Goal:** to establish a testing system that is accessible, reliable and fast
- Evolve to a system where most of the tests use rapid testing methods
- Envision system with PCR, LAMP and antigen in the next 3-6 months
- CIC Health and Garnet Health are two partners who contract with businesses to offer tests and testing support
- The State of Vermont is exploring a “starter kit” model for businesses

Future of Vaccine and Testing Strategies

Deputy Secretary Jenny Samuelson
Agency of Human Services

Q & A