Phil Scott, opening
- Metrics continue to move in the right direction in terms of COVID-19 cases, hospitalization, ICU
- Pieciak away, due to holiday full DFR modeling report will be posted to DFR website tomorrow (Wed)
- Addresses budget adjustment – wants more for housing, ARPA funding go more to “transformational” initiatives

Kristin Clouser, Sec of Administration
- This is very different Budget Adjustment Act (BAA) than any past year – historic funding available to spend
- This must go to address future vision for Vermont – ARPA must go to high value long-term investments like housing, broadband, clean water, climate resilience

Mark Levine, MD, VDH
- Abridged DFR Report available here (full report available tomorrow)
- Reinforce improving status of COVID-19 in VT
- Vermont is averaging 220 cases over the last 7 days, decreased 28% over the last 7, down 88% from Omicron peak
- Test positivity decreased 24% over the last 7 days
- New hospital admissions stable, 20% decrease in the 7-day hospitalization – expect this trend to continue in the coming weeks
- 33% decrease in the 7-day ICU average over the past week – lowest level since last October – first time this morning in a long time below 10 in ICU (8)
- For first time, see fatalities trending down
- Seeing a time of less transmission in VT
- Beginning to be able to plan for and move to recovery
- Assessing how much to continue state PCR testing vs distribution of rapid tests, especially as overall risk decreases
- Will begin focusing on individual risk assessment vs overall mitigation
- This can be harder on those with higher health needs – and will need to support those needs – not to judge wearing masks
- BA2 variant has been found in 47 states including VT – no definitive word on severity and transmissibility – will continue to follow the data – so far we still see cases going down
- Seeing the impacts in other areas: Recent MMWR: Girls 12-17 had more ED visits for MH needs – VT data mirrors higher ED visits for young women for suicidality
- Parents of children under age 5 still worried about when their kids can get vaccinated – he feels good we are waiting for more data and still planning for what distribution in VT will look like

Questions

Comments on vetoing S. 30?
We passed significant legislation that Vermonters are still not accustomed to – want to educate about that rather than new laws – though understands on “loophole” – part of the point was to make sure the
government acts expeditiously – but should not go from 3 to 30 days – path forward would be moving from 3 to 7 business days – this should give enough time for a background check – there is opportunity to work between now and end of session for resolution

**What is happening with hotel/motel voucher program?**
FEMA may be extending federal funds. Sec Samuelson: important to transition to permanent housing; extending current hotel program to March 31 while get an emergency rental voucher program up and running – need funding in BAA to make these transitions

**More comments on how prevalent BA2 variant is?**
Recent CDC data was from January: 96% BA1, 2% Delta, only 1-2% BA2 – we don’t believe more severe, perhaps more transmissible, but don’t have a lot of experience yet

**Comments on moving from pandemic to endemic?**
ML: can’t focus on “End” in endemic – it means we are still living with the disease and responding in how we live with it;
You have mentioned late spring, early summer for this transition – is that still realistic? Yes

**Outbreaks in corrections – what are we doing to address?**
Scott: None of the cases seem to be severe, especially if they’ve been vaccinated; somewhat surprised to see the outbreaks but again this is highly transmissible;
Samuelson: COVID protocols are still in place when new individual come into the facility; are starting to look at the protocols but may be phased given the risks in congregate settings – starting to look at more targeted interventions;
Is there funding to address impacts on all the repeated lock downs? Samuelson: yes, dept looking to strengthen mental health and peer-to-peer services, more counseling for staff

**Is decrease in test reporting due to more at-home testing?**
ML: The reality is we don’t know how many at-home tests are being done – it means that number of cases and even test positivity are less reliable; we should look more at hospitalization and hospital capacity; and hospital admissions due to COVID – about 60-70%