



Daily Update on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) **August 28, 2020**

New information is in red and bold.

This update is available online at healthvermont.gov/covid19
Click the “See the Latest Update” button.

Please visit the Vermont Department of Health’s COVID-19 web and data pages
healthvermont.gov/covid19

Preparations for flu season amid pandemic are underway

Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD said at a press conference Friday that preparations are beginning for flu season, with the goals of keeping Vermonters healthy, and to have the rate of flu be as low as possible to ensure that we do not face a “twindemic” of both flu and COVID-19 cases this winter.

“Our primary focus will be to increase the rate of vaccination, especially among children and teens,” Dr. Levine said, adding that last year only 42.6% of children ages 5 to 12 and 35.5% of our 13 to 17-year-olds received the flu vaccine. “We can and must do better.”

Dr. Levine emphasized that no decision has been made to require universal flu vaccine for all K-12 students. Currently, only one state, MA, has moved to require flu vaccination for students.

“A policy decision of whether to do so is still under consideration — driven, as always, by the data and science,” Dr. Levine said. “But as a physician and a public health chief, I would be shirking my responsibility to protect the health of Vermonters if we did not at least explore the merits as well as the weaknesses of every potential public health intervention.”

Dr. Levine also addressed the controversy around some changes to Centers for Disease Control testing guidance, saying that Vermont’s recommendations will not change.

People who have COVID-19 symptoms should absolutely be tested, in addition to anyone who receives a recommendation from a provider to be tested.

Those who have had close contact (being within 6 feet for about 15 minutes or more) with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 can certainly be tested, Dr. Levine said. In addition, for these people, if they are part of or interact with a vulnerable population, we might strongly encourage testing.

He added that anyone identified as a close contact also needs to quarantine for 14 days to prevent any possible spread of the virus.

The CDC also essentially leaves the need for a travel-related quarantine up to states. Vermont still has the same policy and [map](#) that calls for the need for quarantine from yellow or red zones.

Coronavirus Relief Fund Grants

Agency of Human Services Secretary Mike Smith provided an update Friday on two of the Coronavirus Relief Fund grant programs being administered by the Agency: Front-Line Employees Hazard Pay Grant Program and the Health Care Provider Stabilization Grant Program. These two programs were authorized by the legislature and signed into law by Governor Scott on July 2.

The Front-Line Employees Hazard Pay Grant Program is for certain public safety, public health, health care, and human services employers whose employees were engaged in activities substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency during March 13, 2020 through May 15, 2020.

The online application portal for this program opened on August 4, and so far, AHS has received 460 applications.

To date, seventy applicants have met our review criteria for completeness, accuracy and appropriateness and will be awarded a total of \$10,397,600.00 early next week. The total appropriation for this program is \$28 million.

Applications are being reviewed in the order of application submission, and all applications received in August are expected to be reviewed by mid-September.

New on healthvermont.gov

In Vermont, nearly 64% of the relationships between COVID-19 cases and their close contacts were among immediate family or roommates.

Learn more about how people with COVID-19 may have been exposed to the virus in the latest [Weekly Summary of Vermont COVID-19 Data](#), with a spotlight on Sources of Exposure.

Case Information

Current COVID-19 Activity in Vermont
As of 12 p.m. on August 28, 2020

Description	Number
Total cases*	1,589 (3 new)
Currently hospitalized	3
Hospitalized under investigation	8
Total people recovered	1,400
Deaths+	58
People tested	126,755
Travelers monitored	769
Contacts monitored	68
People completed monitoring	7,354

* Includes testing conducted at the Health Department Laboratory, commercial labs and other public health labs.

+ Death occurring in persons known to have COVID-19. Death certificate may be pending.

Hospitalization data is provided by the Vermont Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Coalition and is based on hospitals updating this information.

Find more at the data dashboard: healthvermont.gov/currentactivity.

Guidance for Vermonters

Get the information you need at our [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

- If you are having a medical emergency, call 9-1-1 or go to the hospital.
- If you think you have [symptoms of COVID-19](#), call your health care provider.
- Maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet and [wear a mask when near others](#).

Getting Tested for COVID-19

Anyone can get tested, but not everyone *needs* to get tested.

Talk with your health care provider if you think you should be tested for COVID-19.

- If you don't have a provider, dial 2-1-1, or contact the nearest [federally qualified health center](#) or one of Vermont's [free & referral clinics](#).

[Visit our testing web page](#) for more guidance and where to get tested if you do need it.

Return to School Guidance

Schools: [Strong and Healthy Start: Safety and Health Guidance for Vermont Schools](#)

Mental Health: [A Strong and Healthy Start: Social, Emotional and Mental Health Supports During COVID-19](#)

Sports: [Fall Sports Programs for the 2020-2021 School Year](#)

Find additional resources on our [Schools, Colleges and Child Care Programs web page](#).

Traveler Information

Visit our [Travel to Vermont](#) web page for continually updated information and guidance, including about quarantine requirements, testing, and to [sign up with Sara Alert for symptom check reminders](#).

Take Care of Your Emotional and Mental Health

If you or someone you know is in crisis or needs emotional support, help is available 24/7:

- Call your [local mental health crisis line](#).
- Call the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 1-800-273-8255.
- Text VT to 741741 to talk with someone at the [Crisis Text Line](#).
- For more information visit healthvermont.gov/suicide.

Get self-help tips and connect to mental health services at [COVID Support VT](#).
See ways for [Coping with Stress](#).

For more information:

- COVID-19 health information, guidance and case data: healthvermont.gov/covid19
- Governor's actions: governor.vermont.gov/covid19response
- The state's modeling: dfr.vermont.gov/about-us/covid-19/modeling

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Information for the public can be found at <https://healthvermont.gov/covid19>.