
Reflections and Revelations: 7 Lessons from the Pandemic

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What Have We Learned?

THE ONE THING THE CORONAVIRUS HAS TAUGHT US IS,
THAT IT'S AMAZING HOW DEEP INTO SOMEONES HEAD,
YOU CAN REACH WITH A COTTON SWAB THROUGH THE NOSE



Lesson #1

**All vaccination is local
(and so is everything else).**

- Every vaccination ends with one vaccinator and one patient in a local neighborhood.
- Nearly all key service delivery occurs locally, even if not by local government.
- Planning and coordination at all levels are key, but they must support ground-level work.

Where We Are Now



COVID-19 in Virginia: Vaccine Summary



Dashboard Updated: 2/16/2022

COVID-19 Vaccinations in Virginia

Total Doses Administered - 15,177,686

People Vaccinated
with at Least One
Dose*
6,846,629

% of the Population
Vaccinated with at
Least One Dose
79.7%

People Fully
Vaccinated^
6,099,176

% of the
Population Fully
Vaccinated
71.0%

People Vaccinated
with Booster/
Third Dose**
2,761,318

% of the Adult (18+) Population
Vaccinated with at Least One
Dose
90.4%

% of the Adult (18+)
Population Fully Vaccinated
80.9%

Lesson #2

Our systems of government have pros and cons.

- There is significant tension between:
 - ...the desire for local control and the practical realities of widespread emergencies.
 - ...the desire for control by part-time legislators and the timeliness of full-time administrators.
 - ...the desire for federal relief funds and the bureaucracy that comes with it.

Lesson #3

Partnerships are crucial.

- Public health emergencies require a whole-of-government approach that breaks down silos, especially between state and local government and between local government and local health districts.
- Government must also partner with health systems and providers, non-profits, businesses, volunteers, and the community itself.
- Partnerships must be cultivated in peacetime to be leveraged in crisis.

Lesson #4

Resiliency requires both firmness and flexibility.

- We must stay true to core values and strategic plans, while also being nimble in day-to-day operations.
- Transparency and credibility are vital to community support and vaccine acceptance.
- Politics without science is dangerous, but science without politics is unrealistic.

Lesson #5

Emergencies are inconvenient truths.

- An emergency occurs whenever our normal systems can't handle a situation, but there is a strong bias against acknowledging when that happens.
- Emergencies require urgent behavioral changes – in organizational structure, allocation of resources, logistics, daily lifestyle, etc.
- Preparedness education and training must help set the expectation that it will not be business as usual.

Lesson #6

Community engagement is key.

- We need to fund genuine engagement that reflects and respects community diversity.
- Engagement requires robust, culturally competent staff who have developed relationships before they're needed.
- All areas of government can benefit from engagement, not just public health.

Lesson #7

Public health matters every year.

- We can't wait until a pandemic to invest in public health infrastructure.
- Public health must be integrated throughout all government plans and projects.
- The public health system itself will need to go through a recovery.
- Public health is a primary eligible use for locality ARPA funds.

Reflections and Revelations: The Past Few Years

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