



Office of Governor Christopher T. Sununu
Press Conference
Wednesday, October 13, 2021, at 3:00 p.m.

Governor Sununu:

Good afternoon, everybody. Good to see everyone. David, how are you? Good afternoon. Good to see you, as always. Well, thanks, everyone, for joining us, another one of our many press conferences here just to keep people up-to-date and up-to-speed on what's happening across the State, specifically as it pertains to COVID, but also all the other things revolving around the State.

Before we jump into the Public Health update, I want to start off by talking a little bit about today's Executive Council meeting where a majority of the Executive Council voted to reject the \$27 million in Federal funds, our taxpayer dollars, which would have bolstered and continued our State's very successful vaccination efforts.

To-date, the State has accepted billions of dollars in Federal funding with similar language and stipulations. This exact same Council has voted to approve those Contracts with the exact same boilerplate language. And we will continue to see Contracts come forward with the exact language that is held in question.

Not a single State that we are aware of has ever voted to reject these funds, from Texas to Florida, South Dakota, Mississippi. Every State has accepted these dollars. Our State's response really does depend on this money.

Our healthcare industry is already facing a chronic staffing shortage. And the rejection of these funds shifts our State response efforts to an already burdened healthcare industry, with testing and vaccinations, and other critical needs that flood into our healthcare system on a daily basis.

The people of New Hampshire, I think, have gotten to know that I call the balls and strikes like I see them. I try to be as straightforward and transparent as possible on all of these issues. And today's vote by members of my own Party, frankly, was a disservice to the constituents that we are all elected to serve.

The Attorney General and the Department of Health and Human Services, they addressed all of the Councilors' concerns, and they still voted to send \$27 million of our tax dollars, frankly, back to Washington, D.C., instead of spending it here to help our State get out of this pandemic. Their vote, I think, showed a reckless disregard for the lives that we're losing, while they turn away the tools that our State does need to fight and win this battle against COVID.

We've been very successful over the last 18 months. We've done it our way every single time. And that's a big part of our success. And we will continue to do that. But with that, I guess we can turn it over for Public Health and then we will address a few other issues. Dr. Chan?

Dr. Chan:

Great, thank you. Just a brief update for today; first, the numbers. We are reporting 510 new infections, new people diagnosed with COVID-19. The last week, we've been averaging over 500 new infections per day. And Statewide, there are now 4,218 people with active or current infection.

Our test-positivity has also increased the last week. We're now at around 6% of all tests, antigen and PCR tests combined, that have been positive for COVID-19 statewide. And the numbers of people that are hospitalized with COVID-19 have been stable, but high: 140 people currently hospitalized with COVID-19 statewide. And we continue to see deaths related to COVID-19. We have two new people to report today that have died from COVID-19, bring the total pandemic total to 1,511 people that have died from COVID-19. Neither of these two new individuals was associated with a long-term care facility. And to put this in perspective, in the last week there have been a total of 17 deaths that have been COVID-19-related that have been identified and reported out. The vast majority of these deaths are occurring outside of long-term care facilities, which is very different from the early days of the pandemic.

COVID-19 vaccines remain readily available and are still the most effective and safe way to prevent COVID-19, and to control spread of this pandemic virus. We continue to strongly recommend and encourage anybody who has not yet become fully vaccinated to take the step to do so. People can go online to vaccines.nh.gov to find a location to be vaccinated.

We also want to remind people that outpatient monoclonal antibody therapies are still available and readily accessible for people that have become infected with the COVID-19 virus and are at high risk for progressing to severe disease. These monoclonal antibody therapies have been found to reduce the risk of hospitalization and death after infection. One formulation has also been authorized for use to prevent infection after an exposure, what we call post-exposure prophylaxis. And just as a reminder, there's a list of locations around the State that are administering these monoclonal antibody therapies on our website. People can go to COVID19.nh.gov and look at the Treatment Resources section of our website to find locations. But we encourage people to talk with their Healthcare Providers about referral for treatment, if they are at higher risk for progressing to severe disease and have become infected.

But these monoclonal antibody therapies and other treatments do not do away with the need for people to get vaccinated. COVID-19 vaccination is still the most effective, safe, and important way that a person can protect themselves and protect others. And again, to find a place to be vaccinated, people can go on the website, vaccines.nh.gov. That's vaccines with an S, dot nh.gov to find a place for vaccination. With that, I will turn things over to the Commissioner. Thank you.

Commissioner Shabinette:

Good afternoon. Just an outbreak and a testing update today; today, since our last press conference, we have seven outbreak closures. Closed for outbreaks are: Alpine Health Center; Colonial Poplin; the Federal Prison in Berlin; Peabody Home; Riverside Rest Home; Villa Crest; and Woodlawn.

We have nine new outbreaks to announce today: Austin Home; Country Village; the Courville in Manchester; the Courville in Nashua; Hillsborough County Nursing Home; Laconia Rehab; Lebanon Center Genesis; Merrimack County Nursing Home; and the Northern New Hampshire Prison Facility in Berlin. So that brings our total to 12 institutional outbreaks today.

Around testing, today the Executive Council approved the Department's Contract with ClearChoiceMD to open up four PCR test sites to support testing needs due to the national shortage of

rapid tests. ClearChoiceMD will conduct PCR testings [ph] in areas of States where there's known challenges meeting the demand.

Our test sites in Manchester and Claremont will open this week. Test sites open in Nashua and Newington next week. Each site will be open seven days a week and will conduct at least 150 tests a day. The tests done at these sites will be sent to NorDx Lab in Maine. They currently have a one-day turnaround time and the capacity to receive the ClearChoiceMD tests.

This will help allow kids to return to in-person learning as quickly as possible, so that they don't have a long wait time to get their test results back. We're very excited to expand our testing program yet again in the State of New Hampshire. Thank you.

Governor Sununu:

Great; thank you, Commissioner. I'm going to just touch upon a few other issues, a little bit of an expansion on some of the issues that we talked about. Then, we can open up for questions. As we do occasionally, I wanted to start also by highlighting a few of the datapoints that helps compare New Hampshire to other States, when folks look at how we're doing relative not just to New England but the rest of the country.

As has been true throughout the pandemic, we frankly just continue to be a leader in how we manage the pandemic. And I take a lot of pride in that, not just myself and our Team, but folks all across the State, how the citizens have responded to their ability and opportunity to get vaccinated. We have the third-lowest rate of fatalities in the nation, currently the fifth-lowest hospitalization rate in the country, and, again, just a testament, I think, to how we've managed while providing balance with the strength of our economy. We follow data. We follow science. And we do it New Hampshire's way every time.

Another good trend that we're seeing -- and it's by no means a victory. And we always hesitate, because we know the fall surge is really, I still think, very much upon us. The winter surges could be very much here.

But our -- the hospitalization rate, which is really one of the number 1 metrics that we look at on a daily basis, it really appears to be plateauing, as we've seen in other States across the country. Still early fall, to be sure, but we have seen some promising data there. We've been bouncing around 130 to 140 hospitalizations on any given any over the past few weeks. And it's something that right now, again, our health system is strained, to be sure. But it is not overburdened, and it isn't anything we can't handle. There isn't a mass reduction of services or anything like that. I think that the Teams across the State continue to do a very good job. But we will always keep monitoring the data on a daily basis to make sure that appropriate healthcare is always available to our citizens.

As many of you know, also, we continue to have success with our mobile vaccine van. And the Commissioner has talked about this a little bit. As of last week, we've completed over 130 clinics with our mobile vaccine vans, administering another 1,000 doses, all out in the community, at a direct request of the citizens. So that program seems to be working fairly well.

They're making stops, whether it's private companies or State office buildings, community events, art museums, public parks. Churches have asked for it, as well. And anyone can go onto our website and request the mobile vaccine van. And they'll be able to continue to do so. So that's a great tool, as well, to keep moving forward on vaccinations. The Executive Council also just passed additional funding for Round 2 of that vaccine van today. So obviously we look forward for the additional events, as we go forward.

Another update surrounding the vaccine, yesterday the White House held a call. They typically have a weekly call with Governors. But this week was specifically to discuss booster shots. And while there were some technical difficulties that prevented many of the Governors from joining, we did receive and were able to read notes out of the call. And we want to share some important points that we took from that.

We do expect that the FDA will take up a few very specific and important actions this week. Among them, booster shots for those who received the Johnson & Johnson and Moderna vaccine. We expect the Advisory Panel to vote later this week. Studies have definitely shown that the booster shots provide a significant increase in immunity response. And we will be ready to operationalize boosters for those who received the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccine, as soon as the FDA votes and approves us to do so.

The FDA also expects receiving a request from Pfizer to amend its Emergency Use Authorization to allow children between the age of 5 to 11 to receive the vaccine. And that's obviously also good news, another layer of protection for our population for those who choose to get the vaccine for their children. And look, I guess, if there was a silver lining about the pandemic -- there's not many -- but it's that it really has not -- God bless it -- affected children nearly as much as the adult population.

It is very true that children do not face nearly as serious of an illness as adults. But we all know that kids can still very much get sick, albeit at a lower risk. And so, we see with near consistency on a daily basis. I think right now I don't think we have any hospitalizations amongst kids. We're always looking at that data. And again, we -- I think, to-date, only about 28 children across the State for the last 20 months have been hospitalized. And compared to other States, that's a very positive number.

But, again, we want to make sure that the system is robust, that anyone who does have a hospitalization requirement, whether it's a child or otherwise, we're going to have a system that is there for them and could provide the right treatment and services for them. But so far, the State has done very, very well in terms of managing the pandemic, especially around children.

So that being said, the anticipated authorization from the FDA, it's obviously great news and a lot of families have been awaiting this type of authorization, especially as we head towards the winter break. And again, it's just another tool in the toolbox. We're always adding those tools, adding those drops in the bucket, if you will, to have as robust of a response to the pandemic as possible.

We are not in a State of Emergency, but we still very, very much need resources, funds, and creativity, frankly, in terms of how we manage the pandemic, getting vaccines. I think that what the Commissioner was announcing, in terms of the testing locations, today is just fantastic. We know testing has been really tightened all across the country.

But with four new sites across the State, hundreds and hundreds of new opportunities for families, specifically kids who we want to get back to school, to have the opportunity to get those tests, that's just an awesome move for us. And again, while we're not in that pandemic State of Emergency, per se, we are constantly managing it and constantly pushing the envelope to just provide as many opportunities for our citizens as we can. So, with that, David, I hope I didn't go too fast. I hope that was okay. He always keeps up. He's just awesome. Great, all right. We can open it up for questions. Start over here.

Q&A Session

Governor, you mentioned the -- we heard about the testing locations. What pays for that and is that impacted by the turning away of the Federal dollars? And secondly, Androscoggin Valley up north is getting hit hard right now. Their Emergency Management folks put out a notice to people in town saying the situation is dire at the hospital, surging COVID cases, five in the ICU, two on ventilators. They're trying to get non-COVID patients out and transferred, but they're having a lot of difficulty. How are we doing that? Maybe that's just one hospital. But how are hospitals doing, in general?

Governor Sununu:

Sure.

And what do you say about the...

Governor Sununu:

Sure; so, I'll ask the Commissioner to come up just to talk a little bit. The four locations for additional testing are moving forward. They are not directly impacted by these funds. Now, that being said, these funds were going to provide a lot of other opportunities for specifically our Regional Public Health Networks to take up testing and vaccines, vaccine distribution, and all that.

Now that they cannot do that, that puts additional pressure on the system, as a whole, which again puts more pressure on these testing facilities. So, while I don't think it's a direct funding issue, there's much more pressure on our system and more pressure on our ability to manage the pandemic as a whole, because we're going to have to ask our traditional healthcare facilities to do more.

The Regional Public Health Networks who were providing the vaccines, for example, to First Responders, they were going to do the vaccine clinics for kids in schools. That's where that funding was going. And so, now that that's not happening, there is a domino effect here.

One thing that again I think a lot of folks just do not appreciate that these funding sources, these funding mechanisms, they don't just live in silos. It isn't just about funding about one thing, and if you don't approve it, it doesn't happen. It's a domino effect and a chain-reaction effect across our entire healthcare system. And unfortunately, the Executive Council didn't want to listen to any of that today. But it will have a very severe negative effect to our ability to manage.

As for the -- I'll let the Commissioner come up if she wants to add anything to that. But as for the Androscoggin issue, as well, I'll let the Commissioner add her two cents. But we have a Healthcare and Hospital Association here, where all the hospitals are constantly talking sometimes many times a week. We talk to them every single week, as part of their conference calls. And we participate in those from the State level. They talk amongst themselves. And there is definitely a collective, shared responsibility to make sure the system, as a whole, is robust. And so, if Androscoggin is having trouble, if they're being overburdened right now because of outbreaks up there or an increased level of hospitalization, or other services aren't be provided, while I can't say this hospital replaces that one and that hospital replaces that one, there is a collective to say, okay, how can we help each other and manage, because I think everyone appreciates the system, as a whole, has to be successful. And you can't just not be a helpful partner. And I

can't speak for other States, but, in this State, it works really well for the most part. I don't know if the Commissioner wants to add to that or anything having to do with the funding and the testing sites.

Commissioner Shibinette:

I did get that message from just kind of rumor mill that Androscoggin Valley was having a hard time. So I did reach out and talk to the CEO of Androscoggin Valley late last week and asked him how the State could help. What could we do to bring him the equipment or facilitate care at the hospital?

So, a couple of the areas that he pointed out is the need for more rapid tests, which we sent hundreds more not up to just that hospital, also the surrounding communities that are doing rapid tests. So we did that.

He did express some concern about making sure that they had regular oxygen deliveries. So we did reach out and they did have the regular oxygen delivery. And that put us on notice that we had to make sure that we had a backup for anybody if that became a problem. So we started problem-solving that.

He did say that I would be the first call if he ran into a place where he could not continue to provide the care at the standards that they were typically providing there. So, as of right now, I think the hospitals come together and they do the transfers. They meet every Tuesday and Thursday. The Department is on those calls. And when someone becomes overloaded, they do work together to move those patients into other care settings. And as far as I know, and based on my conversation last week, they are still doing that.

Commissioner, while you're there, do you know what the situation is currently with childcare centers in the State? Like, have there been any outbreaks recently? And are they dealing with any staffing shortages?

Commissioner Shibinette:

I don't know about the staffing shortages. But based on workforce in the State, I would say they're probably in the same position as everybody else, both private and public, and healthcare and not healthcare. We're all struggling for workforce right now.

We can get you a list of childcare centers that are in outbreak status. It's not coming up as something that is hugely significant. Most of the outbreaks and clusters we're seeing right now are in the school setting.

Can I ask a question of Dr. Chan about the monoclonal antibody therapy? I'm interested in knowing sort of a little history about when it came into the State, how many times it's been used, and what level of care is needed. Does it depend on how bad you are, in terms of how much it responds, and whether that's available at all hospitals in the State?

Dr. Chan:

Yeah, so in terms of where they're available, I would point people to the resources on our website for where people can access these therapies. These aren't sites where people can just walk in. So, the first point of contact should be someone's Primary Care Provider to help navigate the referral system and be directed on where's most appropriate to go.

In terms of usage of the monoclonal antibodies, I don't have the exact numbers. But we can certainly try and loop back with you with more exact numbers. But there's three different monoclonal antibody products that are coming into the State and are being distributed to the various administration locations, based on their request and their anticipated need.

The final, I think, comment is that these are therapies that are primarily directed to people that have COVID-19, that are infected. They're still in outpatient, meaning they haven't been sick enough to require hospitalization. But they're at-risk for severe disease, meaning they're at-risk for requiring hospitalization. They're at increased risk of death from COVID-19. And these therapies are intended to help reduce the risk that somebody who has COVID-19, reduce the risk from them needing to be hospitalized or possibly dying from their infection.

Is it a respiratory medicine, basically?

Dr. Chan:

Oh, most of the medicines are administered through an intravenous infusion, which is part of the logistical difficulty of setting up administration locations, right? These aren't pills that someone can take. It requires an intravenous infusion for most of them.

Dr. Chan, while you're there, a quick question and a follow-up, if you wouldn't mind. For a number of months, there's been a lot of people who have said that the vaccination rate has stalled in New Hampshire, despite all the publicity and outreach, and the press conferences, the fact that they're free. Is it safe to say, in your medical opinion, yes-or-no, that most people at this point who have chosen not to take the vaccine have done so due to a personal health choice, and not necessarily a lack of knowledge about the vaccine or access to the vaccine?

Dr. Chan:

It's hard to speak for all people. I think that people fall into different groups. There certainly are people that have made the decision to not get vaccinated. And no matter what we say or no matter what efforts we go through to make vaccine available, will not get vaccinated.

There are other groups of people, however, that maybe are more apathetic. They're not rushing out to seek vaccine. And it's this group that we're trying to reach with further messaging and making vaccines more available at the location where people are. That's the purpose of the mobile vaccination clinic, the mobile vaccination vans. And then, I think that there's another whole group of people who are not yet eligible for vaccination. And this is, especially in the coming weeks and months, where I think we really are going to be trying to shift and needing to shift our focus, when the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine is authorized and recommended for use in 5- to 11-year-olds, another whole group of the population of

New Hampshire that we will do the work to try and make vaccines to them, so that they can be vaccinated.

And just for the follow-up, so let's talk about the \$27 million Federal Grant Contract. There have been statements that the vote against the Contract will "cost" or is costing Granite Staters their lives. In your medical opinion, can you give us a rough estimate on how many lives will be cost or lost due to the Contract not being approved, since you just said that the chunk of the population that can't get access to the vaccine and there are a lot of other residents who are choosing not to get the vaccine? That seems like a dramatic statement to make about not \$1 billion but \$27 million in potential outreach, tracking, etc.

Dr. Chan:

Yeah, so I think, in follow-up to the last question, we don't know how many people fall into each group: vaccine resistant; vaccine hesitant. And so, it's not a number that we can put on it. What I can say is that there is still work to be done, getting vaccine out there, particularly as vaccination opens to the younger age groups and there is a need for continued partnerships with our community partners, with our Healthcare Providers, with our Regional Public Health Networks. And oftentimes to do that work, there is the need for additional funds.

And here's the point I'm getting to that. I'm sorry. Give me one more second, if you wouldn't mind. Dr. Fauci said months ago that if we could get to 70% vaccination or some and/or combination of vaccination and people who have gotten the virus, we would get to herd immunity, and we would get to some point that not the pandemic will end, because we're expecting more variants and everything else. And then, he said, well, I really wanted to push that up to 80% in order to get more people vaccinated. That was a political decision not a medical decision. With these statements saying that Granite Staters are going to lose their lives without this \$27 million, that seems really dramatic when 20% of the people can't get the vaccine. 56% of the people have gotten the vaccine. Another 10% almost have gotten infected. We're getting towards that 70%. At what point do you, as a Medical Doctor, say, hey, New Hampshire's getting to her immunity. Yeah, we have to continue to be protected, but we're getting to herd immunity, which is what we were all promised almost a year ago.

Dr. Chan:

Yeah, so we've never -- at least in New Hampshire -- never have promoted a specific number for herd immunity, right? I mean, herd immunity is -- we don't know what exactly that number is. And in fact, the goal of vaccination is not to eliminate COVID. COVID is going to be out there. The goal of vaccination is to get -- and we've said this over and over again -- get as many people vaccinated as possible to control transmission. And so, the higher vaccination rates we can get, the better for all of us. And I'll also point out that the pandemic is a very fluid thing, where the circulating virus has changed.

It's become more infectious over time. The Delta variant has been estimated to be at least 50%, 60% more infectious and easily spread than the Alpha variant, which, itself, was 50% more infectious than some of the earlier variants. And so, this has required flexibility, I think, on all of our parts, and has required us to be flexible in our approach. But with the more infectious Delta variant, we need more people vaccinated.

The kids are testing positive at higher rates. Is this because of Delta, or is this because they're doing testing more?

Dr. Chan:

So, actually, our recommendation for testing, particularly for schools, is the same this year as it was last year, right? We haven't changed our recommendation for schools, in terms of them having a low bar, a low threshold to exclude a kid from school who's symptomatic on a test.

Right, but are more kids getting tested, because last year a lot of students were remote?

Dr. Chan:

Yeah, so I don't know the exact numbers, in terms of breakdown of the number of people getting tested by age group. But what I can say is that the rates of COVID have gone up in all age groups, from children to younger adults, to older adults.

So, the trend here is one of increasing transmission and increasing COVID infections across all populations in all age groups. And yes, children have seen some of the higher rises in COVID-19 infection. But, keep in mind, also, that it's that younger age group. It's the younger age groups that remain unvaccinated, and I think that highlights the importance of getting vaccine available and being out there vaccinating kids.

So, will everybody who wants to get the vaccine be able to get it, even with this funding cut?

Dr. Chan:

I'll let somebody else comment on that.

Yeah, absolutely.

Dr. Chan:

But the goal is to make vaccines available to everybody. We've heard from the Federal Government that the Federal Government has procured enough vaccines to vaccinate all children in the U.S. So, it's not an issue of supply. We will order the vaccines that are available and be out there vaccinating kids as quickly as possible.

So even without this \$27 million, anybody who wants it can still get it?

Dr. Chan:

I'll let the Governor respond. Thanks.

Governor Sununu:

Yes, even without the \$27 million, anyone who wants a vaccine can get a vaccine. What is really hindered is the ease of access to it, the fact that our Regional Public Health Networks were going to provide these clinics. They can't do that anymore. The fact that they were providing the First Responders vaccines, they can't do it.

So those groups have to find other avenues. Still there if they want it, there's plenty of it to be sure. But those groups don't have the funding to provide that ease of access that has been a big part of our success with the vaccine.

So, Governor, you served on the Council. And you know the first rule about bringing a Contract to the Council.

Governor Sununu:

Is that?

So, you got to have three votes in order to bring it to the Council.

Governor Sununu:

That's not true at all.

Well, so were you surprised...

Governor Sununu:

I've brought lots of.

Were you surprised by the decision?

Governor Sununu:

No, I've been talking to the Councilors all week. I had personal calls with them. I pushed as hard as I possibly could repeatedly on this. They know exactly where I was. I was very clear. I was not ambivalent at all about the need for this to move forward, what it really meant, the massive amount of misinformation, the conspiracy theories, and all the nonsense that was following. So a lot of the data behind the Contracts, that's why I brought the Attorney General up. That's why I was very clear upfront and had the Attorney General and the Team from Health and Human services clarify any misinformation that was out there.

At the end of the day, there was no rational, logical reason to say no to these Contracts. Every argument that the Council attempted to bring up was shot down immediately. But we pushed as hard as we possibly could. I stayed in constant contact with them. And again, at the end of the day, the votes just weren't there.

Councilor Warmington said you should keep bringing it up at every meeting. Are you thinking about bringing it back after a period of time to see if some kind of change...

Governor Sununu:

Well, I'm not sure if we would bring it back with this funding. I mean, I guess we will have to look at if there's other funding opportunities out there, if there's other ways to do it. We're not just going to give up. We're going to keep pushing, as we always do.

I take a lot of pride in the fact that our Team has been very innovative and very creative and can usually find a way to get something done. Might look a little different, might come from a different funding source.

But this stuff is important. It's nothing that you just -- well, it didn't pass, so we're going to move on. These Regional Public Health Networks provide a huge resource, in terms of not just managing the vaccine or the money that goes to the call centers, or the staffing issues, all of that. There's a lot of funding in there for stuff even above-and-beyond the vaccines that was shot down today.

So, we're going to have to find other avenues. Those were New Hampshire State taxpayer dollars that we've now turned away, sent back to Washington, and they'll probably just send them off to some other State. It's not like the Federal Government's going to put them in a savings account. Lord knows the Biden Administration doesn't do that very well. So, they're just going to send the money somewhere else. And so, that's one of the other disheartening things.

All our taxpayers paid for that. That's our money. That's the citizens' money. And the fact that we would turn it away when we've already accepted this similar language in other Contracts, when we've already moved forward on our own terms every single time for the last 20 months, no precedent whatsoever that we're somehow losing our sovereignty, or we would just capitulate to the Biden Administration on what we are challenging on some of their demands on the Mandates. Of course, the State has no Government-driven Mandate on vaccines, by any means. It's all choice and we're going to keep it that way.

So, all these arguments just fell right apart, right in front of the Council. And again, they had no response other than we're just going to stay our course. And there was no rational -- by the end, there was no rational argument to vote it down. But they still insisted on doing it.

So what do you do about that, as Governor? You have to deal with these Councilors, Members of your Party, who you say were simply enthralled in conspiracy theories when they voted.

Governor Sununu:

I would say they were, I think, pushing out a lot. And I was very blunt about the fact that they were pushing out a lot of misinformation based on these Contracts. And you can't just, as an Elected Official, get up there and say whatever you want when it's not true at all, and not expect to be pushed back. And I think the Commissioner and myself, and the Attorney General did a great job clearly correcting the record, correcting the facts around it, correcting our ability to maintain our sovereignty and to manage it. But I think they're -- their votes were baked-in at that point. And they were just going to vote the way they were going to vote, no matter what.

Are we basically facing mob rule mentality in the State?

Governor Sununu:

Course not, no.

Well, what can you do...

Governor Sununu:

No, I would -- that's a very -- no.

Can that come back?

Governor Sununu:

We can bring it back in a -- we just answered that -- we can bring it back in a variety of different ways. Those are Elected Officials. They have every right to vote the way they did. I passionately disagree. There was no logic behind their vote. But those are elected officials. That's not mob rule. That's a very irresponsible statement even to make, frankly.

So if we want to bring those Contract back, so we want to bring the ability to fund those programs back, we're going to look and be creative about how we might be able to do that. I don't -- we don't know today, because it just got shot down.

Have you talked to the Legislature about how they might act on Friday?

Governor Sununu:

No, I literally just got out of the meeting 20 minutes ago. So, no, we haven't talked to anyone.

The Councilors were engaging in what you called fantasy?

Governor Sununu:

Yeah.

All right. You had people inside and outside the building spouting misinformation about the vaccine and about the Registry.

Governor Sununu:

Yeah.

You had the Vaccine Death Report last week. Is this the Republican Party in New Hampshire now?

Governor Sununu:

Course not.

A bunch of misinformation and conspiracy theories?

Governor Sununu:

Look, I don't believe most of the people standing in the public in that room protesting were part of the Republican Party. These are anti-Government, shut-it-down, no Government at all cost-type individuals. I mean, they've been very blunt about that, frankly.

Well, the Councilors are GOP.

Governor Sununu:

No, I understand. I thought you were talking about the folks that were attending the meeting.

Right.

Governor Sununu:

So, no, I don't think any -- no one issue, no one Contract, no one individual defines a Party, whether it's the Democrat or the Republican Party, right? We have a platform. We have ideals. We agree with some. We disagree on others. We passionately degreed on the Contract today. I think we put up as strong of an argument as you could possibly put up. But obviously they weren't going to listen to reason and they were going to move forward on their own.

But that doesn't mean that it completely shuts our ability down to manage the pandemic or anything like that. There's some roadblocks here. But if we can get creative and find funding, and ways to do it, we're going to do it.

Governor, you mentioned a lot that we're the only State to take this approach to vote this funding down.

Governor Sununu:

As far as I know, yeah. I've talked to other Governors about it and every other State's taken it, conservative and liberal States. They've all taken this money. This is a very unprecedented thing.

Sure; well, given that this (inaudible), I would imagine that the Biden Administration is aware of today's vote and kind of the...

Governor Sununu:

I don't know that.

Have you had any conversations with anybody at the Federal level over new approaches for finding other ways to get this money, new approaches to maybe reformulating the grant?

Governor Sununu:

Well, no. The grants were just shot down 20 minutes ago. So, no, we haven't had any discussions with anyone at the Federal level.

You haven't had discussions before this, though, in anticipation potentially?

Governor Sununu:

No.

Or any outreach from the Administration?

Governor Sununu:

No, I don't know. I don't think that President Biden watched the vote today. I mean, I don't. I think they're in their own cloud. They're doing their own thing in Washington. The idea that they pay attention at all to what's happening in States I think is a completely foreign concept to them.

They are about big government, one size fits all solutions out of Washington, D.C., and that's exactly why we never give up our sovereignty. That's exactly why we do it differently. And that's exactly why the State of New Hampshire has been phenomenal in the way it's managed this pandemic.

I have another question, unless the -- oh.

Governor Sununu:

Oh, sure. Well, I'll come back to you.

Yeah.

I was just going to ask, Governor, based on what we're just saying, should Granite Staters be concerned that this body, Governor's Council, that has so much power may be driven by ignorance and misinformation?

Governor Sununu:

No, look. It's a checks-and-balance system. Look, the Executive Council system is a great system. I think all States should have it, frankly. It's a checks-and-balance on Contracts and nominations. And the fact that any Governor, whether it's myself, previous, or future Governors can't just, with a swipe of a pen, do things.

One of the things I highlighted today was the importance of the Executive Branch, especially a Governor or a President, to know the limitations of their own power, which is why I'm so upset with President Biden thinking that, with a sweep of a pen, he can create these OSHA Rules and just impose all this stuff on private businesses. That is fundamentally wrong.

While we might want everyone to be vaccinated, the ends do not justify the means when it comes to the process of government. So you always want, I think, a good checks-and-balances. We have it here. We passionately disagreed on these Contracts. But we also agreed on another 140 Contracts today, right?

So it's not a defining moment by any means for a Party, for individuals. But it is defining for us in terms of knowing that we're going to have to be creative in terms of making sure that we keep all the access, all the availability, all the flexibility that we have earned -- not just been given, but we have earned that flexibility by performing so well, I think. And we're going to keep doing that to make sure that the citizens know that the system will be there for them, one way or another.

Governor...

Governor Sununu:

I'm going to go back to Ethan, then I'll come back to you.

Okay. Today at the Council meeting, you were asked about the Vaccine Registry. This is obviously a new program for the State. You were asked whether you would support looking into making it opt-in. Right now, it's opt-out. Can you articulate your position on that right now? Do you support the...

Governor Sununu:

Well, if the Legislature wants to change their mind and make it an opt-in Vaccine Registry versus an opt-out, I guess that that's never really been considered before. I'd have to look at it, what it might potentially mean. Is it practical? Is it -- could it actually be applied? How would it actually work? So if that's the way the Legislature wants to go, we will take a look at it then. But we're not committing one way or the other. But, again, we're...

What's your personal position on whether -- is the Registry fine as it is, or do you...

Governor Sununu:

I think the Registry's absolutely fine as it is. The Legislature passed it. It is the law of the land. That Council basically rejected the funds that would help populate it with the appropriate data; it is the law of the land in 49 other States. Every other State in this country has a Vaccine Registry. You don't see individuals screaming that their Civil Rights are being abused or any of that, frankly, misinformation that's being pushed out there. That's not happening anywhere else in the country.

So the idea that it would all of a sudden happen here, the idea that we're going to go door-to-door and ask people to submit their information as part of it, that's nonsense. That would never happened here. It hasn't happened anywhere else. It's not going to happen here and that's not the intent or the purpose of the Registry.

So, again, a lot of misinformation and, frankly, conspiracy theories about why is the Government doing this? We're the last ones to do it. We're the last State to get onboard with the rest of the country. And there is an opt-out. You can opt-out of it if you like. That's a nice piece of flexibility that's already built into the system. It's great. And so, the way the Legislature passed it, I think, was appropriate.

I have no position with it going forward. If the new Legislature wants to change that, that's their prerogative. It's not for the Governor and Council just to change the laws willy-nilly. It's really the Legislature, the voice of the people, that have to come together and figure out what they want to do. And then, we can take that, if we decide to pass it and I decide to sign the Bill, and we think we can operationalize it, to turn it into something operational and practical, and successful for the State.

There may be efforts to dismantle the Vaccine Registry. Would you veto those efforts?

Governor Sununu:

Yes.

Okay.

Governor Sununu:

Yes. Look, we were the only State in the country that doesn't have one, right? If folks want to dismantle the Vaccine Registry, frankly, it's based on, again, more misinformation and the idea that it somehow infringes on the rights of individuals, which it clearly does not.

Go ask all the other folks across the rest of the country that have been part of this system for years and years, whether it's Governor Abbott in Texas or Governor DeSantis in Florida. They all manage them. They all do it. And there's no problems in those. And there wouldn't be any problems with ours, either.

But, I mean, do you see it as your duty to try to dissipate these feelings within? I mean, these Bills are coming. They're being sponsored by Republicans.

Governor Sununu:

My job is to make sure that the facts are clear. And again, I always respect where people's vote may lie. We might disagree on an issue and have different philosophies. That is always very well-respected.

But when there's massive amounts of misinformation or bad data being put out, or conspiracy theories -- we saw it with what happened with the Legislature the other day, people putting out the idea that they're pumping -- our vaccines are putting 5G technology into our cells to control our -- I mean, that's just nonsense. So, I have a responsibility to make sure that we shut that down very quickly, because that's not even debatable, right?

If we have a different philosophy over where we should go, that's always respected. And I try to make my position clear. And the other side might make their position clear. And we can disagree. But I think one of the foremost jobs of the Executive is to be super transparent and super clear, and very data-driven, and be accurate and truthful. And again, a lot of misinformation out there, so that's what my passion was really around today, making sure that folks knew the facts. And hopefully they would take a vote based on facts.

How many folks were arrested today?

Governor Sununu:

I believe there were nine is the report I got. But I would have to see.

Are there charges coming, or is it just detained and removed from the building?

Governor Sununu:

No, I believe they were arrested with pending charges.

Okay, pending charges.

Governor Sununu:

Yeah, I'd have to defer to the Department of Safety for additional information.

Okay. People have been protesting outside your house starting last year. They shut down the Council meeting two weeks ago. Is this discouraging? Does this make you think about not continuing in the public light...

Governor Sununu:

No, no, no. Well, I would tell you from a personal level, it's very discouraging. And I can't lie to you about that. And the fact that my kids play in the yard sometimes and you have people outside screaming and intimidating my family, there's no place for that ever, ever. And look, whether it's the ultra-left woke culture that wants to cancel everyone and protest them on one side, whether it's anti-Government culture there, it's the exact same thing. They've all joined forces together. And the line of appropriate and -- appropriate behavior and decency has been crossed.

Of course the public has to have a voice. Of course they have to have the ability to protest and have a voice. Come to the State House all you want, that would be great. There's an open, large, public round. That's the right place to do it. That's where the bulk of government and decisions happen. That's the appropriate place.

To cross that line like we've really never seen before and start going to individuals' houses -- not just mine but others -- and think that that's appropriate and okay, I think the ultra-left and ultra-non-Government right, anti-Government people, whatever you want to call them, they've all kind of joined forces. And culturally this line has been moved.

So I would say it's discouraging from a leadership position in that realm, that, as a society, across America, we've seen this line be moved. And we have a responsibility to start bringing the conversation back to where it needs to be, start getting people to tone it down. Doesn't mean they can't be passionate; but tone down the response in terms of its intrusion on personal lives and family, and things of that nature. There's no place for...

Does it influence your decision about your next...

Governor Sununu:

Not at all.

Not a question, no?

Governor Sununu:

No. No, not at all.

Governor, there's been a lot of discussion about the lack of open press conferences by the Federal -- any -- from anyone from the Federal Delegation, whereas you and your Staff have spent about 19 months now, dozens of press conferences that we've all...

Governor Sununu:

I think I answer more questions about Federal legislation than the Federal Delegation does.

Well, let me. So two-part question real quick: have you had any private conversations with any of our four Representatives about the issues that -- as a leader of the State, the issue that many people have concerning these Mandates privately? Meaning have you crossed, say, Chris Pappas and say, can you give me 15...

Governor Sununu:

Not privately, no. I don't believe I have.

Okay. And should you?

Governor Sununu:

They're never here. I mean, I don't see them very often.

But should you, though?

Governor Sununu:

Oh, we're happy to. We've sent letters. I've sent a letter to the Delegation yesterday. Again, there's four of them. We sent a letter very clearly because they're now supportive of the Federal Government looking at every \$600 transaction of every American in the country. And they're going to demand that the banks hand over that information.

The variety of problems that that's creates, in terms of operational invasion of privacy, overbearing Government, and you have the Secretary of the Treasury out there saying, well, we think people aren't paying their taxes, right? This whole idea that the wealthy are going to pay for this \$3.5 trillion, well, that's out the window, because now they're going after everyone that has a \$600 transaction in their account.

So, we've been very clear about our position. And in many cases -- well, I haven't actually picked up the phone to each of them individually. We've written our letters to them. They're the Federal Delegation. They have the most influence to change that process. To-date, as you just pointed out, they basically sit on the sidelines and don't answer questions, and don't do open press conferences.

The reason I ask that is because we've obviously seen a lot of concern about the Mandate. But I'll tell you, from a personal experience yesterday, I spent a number of hours with Southwest Employees all over the country trying to get home.

Governor Sununu:

Yeah.

As you know that there were more than 1,000 flights canceled, many people are not telling the truth. This was a walkout by Flight Attendants and Pilots. I spoke to a number of them, while I was crisscrossing the country. You had a Union -- and I guess this is a good thing, too. It's a good thing to be able to walk out and say, no -- shut down and strand hundreds of New Hampshire residents, if not more than 1,000 over a 72-hour period based on a Mandate that the CEO of the company says, we don't want to do this and yet we're being told to do this. It could affect our tourism industry, which we've done a lot of press coverage about.

Governor Sununu:

Absolutely, yeah.

At what point, again, do you call our Federal Delegation and say, do you understand what you're doing to people in your...

Governor Sununu:

Oh, we've made that very clear. Look, if we need to pick up the phone and start calling them on all of these different issues, we will. Remember this. We're not just talking about -- one day it's the southern border crisis that they're ignoring. One day it's the supply chain issues that no one is doing anything about. One day it's about massive inflation that's going to be hitting this country and low-income families especially across the Granite State for years to come. But, they don't want to talk about that, either.

It's the drugs and the humanitarian crisis of human trafficking coming across the southern border, don't want to touch it or talk about it. It's what happened in Afghanistan. It's a variety. It's these overbearing Mandates, where they're okay with that. And the fact that there's \$3.5 trillion of our money about to be spent that even our grandkids' grandkids won't be able to pay for, but it just increases a large, bloated Government.

But our Federal Delegation right now -- Congressman Pappas, Congresswoman Kuster, Senators Hassan and Shaheen -- they don't want to stand up in front of a press conference and answer any of that. I think, I mean, you're the Press. You guys are the ones, should be asking them.

Joe Biden this weekend said he had 48 votes on the \$3.5 trillion Bill without Manchin or Senator Sinema. So, clearly our Delegation has told Joe Biden they're going to vote for the \$3.5 trillion bloated Bill. But they won't come to New Hampshire and answer your questions about whether they'd vote for it?

I mean the question's very simple. If given that \$3.5 trillion Bill today, would you vote for it? I don't understand why the Press is -- you guys ask me all the time and I think it's an absolute disaster. I

think most of America thinks it's an absolute disaster. But somehow they just kind of dodge away and get away with it.

So we will keep pushing on all of these issues. We haven't given up on any of them. So, whether it's a phone call about one or all of them, we're happy to make it and happy to keep writing the letters and pushing on the Administration. But Washington's in a bubble right now. And I think everyone in America's very frustrated by that.

Governor, on the topic of jobs, I know over the summer we talked to you. And the thought was that, come fall, a lot more people would be going back to work where there were some shortages.

Governor Sununu:

Yeah.

Are we seeing that anywhere? It seems to be, while unemployment's low, there's still a lot of open positions out there.

Governor Sununu:

A lot of open positions; folks definitely aren't coming back to work as fast as we'd like. I think there was a report -- I think a national report recently that said more people have quit their jobs in the last month than ever before. Whether that's because of individual Mandates or the attempts for the Federal Government to impose Vaccine Mandates, I don't know if that's really clear yet.

There's a ton of workforce opportunity out there in terms of jobs available at the highest wages ever. We continue to have one of the lowest unemployment rates and the strongest economies in the country.

So, we're just going to keep doing whatever we can do, whether it's job fairs, finding opportunity for those who are employed, getting -- if a typical two working parents, maybe they reduced to one and a second parent wants to come back to work. They want to reskill. We have lots of opportunities to reskill.

We've just doubled the size of our Nursing School at UNH. We're creating workforce opportunities to reskill and get the workforce where it needs to be so they can reenter on their path. But right now it's been very frustrating for a variety of reasons. But there's no doubt that there's a lot of consternation coming out of Washington, D.C. Folks don't know where the future lies for them and their jobs, and stuff. And so, that could be an issue, as well.

Do you foresee any financial opportunities for businesses to access any -- I mean, a lot of businesses are...

Governor Sununu:

Oh, yeah. Businesses are moving here like crazy. There's no doubt about that. I mean, our population is growing. People are moving to New Hampshire in great numbers. That's great. But businesses are moving and expanding here so fast that the demand for workers keeps increasing. We're definitely the place people want to be.

So, at some point, you really want to believe that those market forces kind of take over. The wages are there. The opportunity's there. And that will help drive folks back to work or back into the workforce.

I believe our workforce is down about 1.5% to where it was versus its all-time high. So we're not that far off. But even at our all-time high, we were at a kind of a fairly critical shortage point. And now it's become a problem for every industry across the board. Yeah.

I just have a question for Dr. Chan about monoclonal antibodies.

Governor Sununu:

Sure.

There's been some reports in other States of hospitals not being able to get access to a much higher demand. Do we have enough of a stockpile to keep -- a widespread strategy to keep people out of hospitals?

Dr. Chan:

Yes, so, in fact, I don't have exact numbers on use of monoclonal antibodies. But I'm not aware that demand has stripped supply at this point. So we still have more monoclonal antibodies available than we're using within the State.

So that's not the case in other parts of the country. But in New Hampshire, we have enough of the monoclonal antibody therapies to meet demand right now. And so, there remains access across the State to people that may need them.

And one quick follow-up: are we seeing any disparities in terms of counties with low vaccination rates? Like, are the hospitals flooded there and not flooded in parts of the State where vaccination rates are higher?

Dr. Chan:

I think hospitals all across the State and all across the country, frankly, have struggled with the most recent surge in COVID-19 cases. So again, I think our numbers are high across the State in all counties. We continue to have a higher substantial level of community transmission across the State. And I think that's putting strain on all of our healthcare organizations.

Governor Sununu:

I think we can -- do we have some questions on the phone?

Holly Ramer with The Associated Press:

Hi, I have two questions. The first one is sort of the flipside to the earlier questions about the possibility of bringing back the Contracts that were defeated today. Could the Councilors who voted against those Contracts bring back the other grants that they already approved with that same language and try to send the money back? And if so, are you concerned that that could happen? And then, my second question is a follow-up on what you were just talking about, about the labor force. I was just looking at some numbers that show, in some States, including New Hampshire, the labor force actually has shrunk a little bit since the extra benefits were ended. So can you talk a little bit about sort of why that's happening?

Governor Sununu:

Sure; so the first question on, can the Councilors bring Contracts back to shoot them down? No, no. The Governor has always had the ability to set the Agenda for the Governor and Executive Councilor meeting. So the Councilor cannot bring any Contracts back to shoot them down. They could always ask for a Contract to come back that they have said previously no to for reconsideration. But it doesn't really work the other way.

In terms of the labor force numbers, again, the only numbers I have in my head, per se -- I know when we -- there's two numbers I have in my mind. And I can get you more details. The labor force, pre-pandemic, February 2020-to-today, is down about 1.5%, I believe, maybe about -- I mean, that's why our unemployment rate is very low. A lot of folks have pulled themselves out of the labor force and have chosen still not to come back in. And that delta's somewhere around the 20,000, 30,000 range, something like that. But I can get you an exact number.

In terms of when we announced that the Federal Stipend would go away, way back in April or May, we saw a big jump in increase in folks reentering the labor force then. And then, since then, across the country, especially over the last 90 days, you've seen a lot of folks quit their jobs and leave the labor force for a variety of reasons. So, you saw that bump like we wanted to see and expected to see. But then, unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, that seems to have dipped down.

We are always working with Richard Lavers and George Copadis at the Department of Employment Security that manages this data and these numbers, and the unemployment issues. And so, again, we will continue working with them to kind of see what they hear in their surveys.

They will tend to do surveys from time-to-time about what they're hearing about why either people are or are not going back to the labor force. And we will continue to look at that data as much as we can. But the opportunities are there. I mean, there's no question about it. The opportunities are absolutely there.

COVID has definitely gone on longer and stronger than we had originally anticipated back in March and April. And so, that's clearly a factor here, whether it's a two -- a parent that says, well, I have to stay home in case my child might have to go to remote learning or something like that. There's just obviously a lot of hesitation on the part of the workforce in terms of getting back. But we can get you some exact numbers there. That's it? Great.

So, another real quick question.

Governor Sununu:

Oh, okay, one more?

So, BEA is spending a lot of money on travel and tourism promotion. Anybody who's been on I-93 on Friday afternoon knows that it's working.

Governor Sununu:

It's working.

At the same time, we have all these supply chain issues. A lot of them are -- many of them are based on export or import products from different countries. In the past, the State has done a lot of promotion with New Hampshire Made, really gone out there, done a lot of marketing. That seems to have died off. Do you think that that's something that maybe Officials should work on in the next...

Governor Sununu:

Oh, yeah. No, we still push the New Hampshire Made Program. We still push that as hard as we ever have, to be sure. We have a lot of great Manufacturers here, whether it's on -- obviously whether it's high space -- I'm sorry, hi-tech aerospace parts, or folks manufacturing more homemade goods, or whatever it might be, with the New Hampshire Made brand on it. So, no, we promote that as strong as we can. People are coming here. They're spending money. The real crunch issue, as we've been discussing, is workforce, and will continue to be.

I'll add my other two cents here. I think workforce challenges are going to exist in the United States of America for the next five to 10 years. This is not a problem that is going to go away anytime soon. And so, you see more Manufacturers that are investing in robotics. You see more Manufacturers or businesses investing in AI, or whatever it might be, to help bring their own processing burden off of the labor force that they just are having a hard time finding and making this more automated. There's pros and cons to that, of course. But I think, across America, that is going to be a fundamental change that we see as we move forward.

So, one thing I've told the State, for example, is I said, look, we're going to be like everybody else. We're going to have our challenges hiring folks for our Staff, for our 10,000 State Employees, and all of those positions. So, what can we do to streamline our processes, to deregulate a little bit, to make our process more efficient, to take the burden off of our State Workers, so they can get through, so that workload doesn't back up on them? They can get through it quicker, faster, more efficiently, and so we're looking at kind of any and all options within the various Departments about streamlining processes and just, again, making it easier for the workforce that we do have.

Last question about the meeting.

Governor Sununu:

Sure.

Rebuild New Hampshire says people were arrested without cause today, the nine folks who were arrested. And they're saying this just proves that you're a tyrant. Is there anything to that?

Governor Sununu:

No.

No?

Governor Sununu:

Of course not. Look, I can't speak for the Law Enforcement. I was at the table. Law Enforcement -- the meeting was disturbed. We actually had to keep stopping the meeting, so that's a disturbance. What the actual charges are, I'd have to defer to Safety on that.

But, no, I have full confidence that there were no individuals there that were just arrested without cause. Every single time that I witnessed somebody being asked to leave the room by Law Enforcement, it was because of a disruption, because they were trying to stop the process. And again, I would just defer to Safety on that.

But I feel very confident. I think they did a great job today. The meeting moved forward. We never had to take any significant -- we had to stop the meeting. But we never had to "end" the meeting, right, and really stop the people's business. And I think that's a testament to the situation that we had, the way we set it up, and the great work that Law Enforcement did to allow us to keep moving as best we can, after individuals were very aggressive about trying to stop the process.

But is the process moving forward? I mean, are you assuming now that these Contracts have been voted down that it'll be back to business-as-usual?

Governor Sununu:

Well, I would hope so.

Sit around the table and there won't be...

Governor Sununu:

I would hope so. But again, there doesn't seem to be a lot of rationale behind a lot of these arguments. So, I can't speak for these individuals or anything like that. We're going to keep the process public. I can tell you that. I think the roadshow of our meetings, I think, is technically...

It's over. Yeah.

Governor Sununu:

I think it's technically over. So, in theory, we should be back at the State House. But, again, we have to make sure that whatever we do, we're doing it in a safe manner, and something that can be managed and controlled, and not stopped.

Again, we might disagree on issues. But, to have folks come in and say, well, I disagree with you so I'm going to stop a very robust checks-and-balance, democratic process, that's very un-American. That's very anti-Government. That's very un-Democratic, frankly. And so, my job is to make sure that we can hold the meeting in a way that provides that level of safety, provides the robustness of the meeting.

I mean, today's meeting went almost five hours. There was a lot of -- on all different issues, too, by the way. I mean, virtually every Commissioner got questioned under the sun. I think the Councilors did a good job asking lots of other questions on other issues. And you want that to continue to happen, to be sure. So I'm not exactly sure what the meetings will look like. But we will make sure they're safe, they're secure, and they can move forward as they should.

Just a quick one for Dr. Chan.

Governor Sununu:

Sure.

I don't know if it's something that's on your radar or not. Are you aware of a potential case of tuberculosis at Concord High School? And then, could you just talk to just having to deal with other diseases on top of COVID, potentially, as we enter the winter months?

Dr. Chan:

Yeah; so, great question. Thank you for that, about our other routine work that we have to do amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. So, our group of Infectious Disease Public Health Professionals continues to respond and investigate cases of other diseases.

I don't know the exact numbers, but we have a certain number of diagnoses of tuberculosis every year. And we investigate each and every one, because there's a follow-up action for people that may have been exposed. And so, we are investigating a case of tuberculosis that is associated with the Concord school district system and have been just recently reaching out to the school system to try to figure out what, if any, exposures may have occurred. But we will continue to work with our Investigators in the school district to do further investigation and messaging on the situation.

And I have a quick follow-up, just a technical question on the Dashboard. This might be a question for the Commissioner. Just a question from my Colleague: the vaccine count, does that include booster shots, or is that being recorded by the State right now?

Dr. Chan:

In terms of the number of vaccine doses administered?

Yes.

Dr. Chan:

Great question about our Vaccine Data Dashboard, and whether booster doses are being recorded. We're having a little bit of difficulty nailing down exactly how many booster doses have been administered in New Hampshire. And there's a variety of reasons for that, so I don't have an exact number. This is something we're trying to track down to get a more accurate estimate of how many booster doses are given.

There's some technicalities, like people are going to pharmacies, for example, to get booster doses. But not all pharmacies are reporting their vaccination data to the State. They're reporting to the CDC, because they're being vaccinated under the Federal Vaccination Program. So, we're trying to sort out exactly what the number is, in terms of booster dose administration. So, we don't have an exact number, but it's something we're actively trying to work on.

So, it sounds like some of those booster shots might end up in this tally that's reported by the State. Some of them might be outside of that, because they aren't being reported to the State?

Dr. Chan:

Correct, exactly. Thanks.

Governor Sununu:

Okay, great. Well, thanks, everyone, for joining us. I tried to keep it at a reasonable time. We will definitely be back either next week or the week after. And we will just keep people informed as best we can, as we kind of hit this potential fall surge. Make sure folks understand and appreciate that the system is there for them.

New testing facilities opening up; always have the availability of the vaccine and making sure that we're just providing every opportunity for New Hampshire to remain that gold standard across the country. Thank you, guys, very much.