

Hi Everyone,

Happy Almost Autumn. Each day at CCS we try to gather as many office-working folks as we can find, wrestle them from their email and zoom to head out for a wellness walk. Along the route is an apple tree with the most beautiful, big red apples. I think they're Macs, but they might be Empires. They are not completely "done" cooking for the season but I still always divert from the walk to shake the tree and grab one. It probably negates the calorie output for the walk, but it satisfies the soul. I hope you're finding a tree or two to shake, too. And if apples aren't your thing, have you seen the sunsets lately? WOW.

CCS and Vermont loses a legendary mom

On September 1st longtime CCS supporter, incredible system advocate and huge, sparkly personality, **Dottie Fullem**, passed away. We will miss her advocacy, her laughter and her support for the Vermont system. She was a strong advocate of our work in the community after being initially very hesitant about closing the workshop. She testified in congress, advocated at the Vermont statehouse and always pushed CCS (which she knew as Champlain Industries, Champlain Sheltered Workshop and Champlain Vocation services then finally Champlain Community Services!) to grow and do better. We'll miss her. Dottie's family is finalizing a funeral mass at St Catherine of Siena in Shelburne, VT on October 16, 2021 at 11:30 AM with Visiting hours at AW Rich in Essex Jct on Friday, October 15, 2021.

Here's a wonderful article that include her from last year on NPR: <https://www.npr.org/2020/09/17/912840482/u-s-agency-urges-end-to-below-minimum-wage-for-workers-with-disabilities>

Celebrating our Direct Support professionals! (attached memo)

In celebration of Direct Support Professional week (9/13 through 9/17) (that's next week!), the State is holding a **DSP Day on Tuesday, September 14th from 12-1 via the zoom link** in the attached flyer (You'll see a face that will make you smile). I hope you can attend!

If you happen to think of it, thank your DSP next week when you see them 😊

Vaccines, masks and mandates...

Everything is happening so fast. Here at CCS we keep plugging along, keeping our masks on and ears to the ground listening for what might happen next. I'm getting occasional questions about whether or not CCS is going to mandate the vaccine for all staff, especially as we're hearing more about medical workers being required to vaccinate. CCS has 97 percent of our staff fully vaccinated, and everyone is wearing masks in all public areas, keeping airflow between us and not meeting in groups. I expect that our staff to be cautious in their non-work hours, because they know how important it is to stay safe. Right now the

state is not requiring vaccinations for our staff. While I don't know whether we will be *required* to at some point, I'm confident in our vaccination rate now. We'll continue to discuss it at our bi-weekly task force meetings and I will keep you updated if anything changes.

WORKFORCE. We know. It's terrible.

Well, it's been kind of a nightmare on the hiring front. I know this is happening everywhere but we have never had so many important positions open. CCS has forty frontline positions and right now we are hiring for nineteen (that's right, NINETEEN) Direct Support professionals. We are also seeking 5 Shared Living providers. None of us have ever had to figure out this much of a shortage – especially in a pandemic. Unfortunately it is this way all around the state; right now there is a **45 percent turnover rate** in the developmental disabilities system. That's TWICE what it was a year ago. These are staggering statistics that aren't just numbers; it means that we cannot get everyone what they need and as a service provider and group of people who are frankly in this work to do just that (give people what they NEED) we are as frustrated and stricken as you. While we have always had an uphill climb with recruitment, this time it's especially grave. One agency, **Francis Foundation**, announced this month that they are closing their doors – they just can't continue to do the work without enough staff. CCS is *NOT* there, but we certainly do appreciate how hard it is to take care of vulnerable people, hardworking staff, overworked home providers and tired families without enough staff. We know. We're doing everything we can think of to make it all work. Thank you sincerely to each one of you who have lent support, leaned in further, told us you understood and let us know you appreciate our efforts. And to those of you who are totally, completely frustrated and *just want us to figure it out* – we TOTALLY hear you. We want us to figure it out, too. In fact, it's almost all we do.

What are we doing about it? Advertising everywhere (changing the ads regularly, too), recruiting, putting up signs, offering hire-on bonuses, bonuses for recruiting people to come to CCS, and taking care of the staff we have HERE so we can reduce the turnover. Do you know someone who might be happy working at the best little DS agency in the world? Send them our way 😊 <https://ccs-vt.org/work-at-ccs/>. We also continue to advocate for better pay for our staff. We continue to compete for employees who can earn more doing less (but while not having as much fun!). We have to figure out how to pay our staff and home providers livable wages that fully compensate their incredible work.

FDA Authorization of a Third Dose of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccine (attached memo) Administration for Certain Immunocompromised Persons

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is currently authorized for emergency use in persons aged 12-15 years, and [fully FDA-approved for use in those 16 and older](#). The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is authorized for emergency use in persons aged 18 years and older. Both vaccines are administered as a series of two injections: the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is administered three weeks apart, and the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is administered four weeks apart.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [authorized](#) the use of a third dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna) for certain immunocompromised persons on August 12, 2021. Of note, the FDA's Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)

amendment does **not** authorize the use of additional doses of the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine, nor does it authorize the administration of Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines to a person who already received Janssen vaccine.

The authorizations for the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines have been amended to allow for an additional, or third, dose to be administered at least 28 days following the two-dose regimen of the same vaccine to individuals 18 years of age or older (ages 12 or older for Pfizer-BioNTech) who are moderately or severely immunocompromised. The additional mRNA COVID-19 vaccine dose should be the same vaccine product as the initial 2-dose mRNA COVID-19 primary vaccine series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna). If the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine product given for the first two doses is not available, the other mRNA COVID-19 vaccine product may be administered.

The Health Department's vaccine appointment registration system currently does not allow patients to make an appointment for a third dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Patients can receive a third dose at a public clinic on a walk-in basis, or at most pharmacies and health care clinic sites. A map of all vaccination clinics is available

at www.HealthVermont.gov/MyVaccine.

Based on this EUA amendment, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated their [guidance](#) for the use of COVID-19 vaccines. Such conditions include but are not limited to the following:

- Active treatment for solid tumor and hematologic malignancies
- Receipt of solid-organ transplant and taking immunosuppressive therapy
- Receipt of CAR-T-cell or hematopoietic stem cell transplant (within 2 years of transplantation or taking immunosuppression therapy)
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (e.g., DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids (i.e., ≥ 20 mg prednisone or equivalent per day), alkylating agents, antimetabolites, transplant-related immunosuppressive drugs, cancer chemotherapeutic agents classified as severely immunosuppressive, tumor-necrosis (TNF) blockers, and other biologic agents that are immunosuppressive or immunomodulatory.

REQUESTED ACTION:

1. Be aware of the recent EUA amendment regarding administration of a third COVID-19 vaccine to those persons who have received an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine and who are moderately or severely immunocompromised.

Take good care,

Beth

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