**Questions from December 1, 2020 PCN Town Hall**

1. Thoughts about caring for newborn exposed to COVID? Initially tested negative. Retest only if symptoms?
   1. In general we would not recheck asymptomatic newborns. Of course it is important that parents be aware of situations such as fever or other symptoms to seek prompt medical advice, just as for any newborn infant.
   2. AAP provides guidance for care of newborns born to COVID-19 positive mothers at <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/faqs-management-of-infants-born-to-covid-19-mothers/>.
2. Are there any mRNA vaccines that have been used in past?
   1. mRNA vaccines are not particularly new and have been utilized most recently for studies of Ebola and dengue virus vaccines. However, no mRNA vaccine has been approved for widespread use.
3. Is Children’s National offering remdesivir for sick patients?
   1. We have been using remdesivir for selected patients with COVID-19 disease for several months and have a lot of experience with this drug.
   2. Decisions to use remdesivir are made on an individual patient basis.
4. Given that health care workers are likely to be among the first to be offered vaccine, what does Bud feel he will need to see to step up and get the vaccine himself.
   1. I have a good working knowledge of how the FDA Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research reviews vaccines and makes decisions; our ID division at CNH has a long-standing collaboration with FDA for fellowship training.
   2. Also, in a previous life (late 1980s/early 1990s) my research involved study of vaccine immunity and clinical vaccine trials.
   3. Naturally, I will want to see the actual study results, so far only available in general terms in press releases, at the December 10 FDA VRBPAC meeting which is open to the public.
      1. Assuming FDA recommends Emergency Use Authorization and the data contain no surprises, I would be first in line for the vaccine (though I doubt even at my age and occupation that I will be selected to be in the first wave of vaccinees).
5. What are the chances of asymptomatic transmission from someone who has been vaccinated?
   1. There is no chance of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 directly related to the vaccine, since no live SARS-CoV-2 virus is incorporated into any vaccine under study.
   2. In general the risk of transmission from a vaccine recipient is much less than from an unimmunized person because the vaccinee is more likely to be immune to infection.
      1. It is certainly possible that a vaccine recipient could still be infected with SARS-CoV-2 since efficacy is not 100%. In that event the infected person could transmit the virus to someone else.
6. Our office has recently obtained the Sofia SARS Cov 2 machine for antigen testing. How would you advise we use this test?
   1. That’s a tough one to answer. A common reason to use this test in the office is for asymptomatic individuals, often to reassure that visiting a relative would be safe. The antigen tests were not designed to be used for clinical decision for asymptomatic persons, and their sensitivity means there is a very significant risk for false negative test results.
   2. I would not recommend using a single antigen test for making clinical decisions about safety for travel or coming into contact with other individuals.
7. Do you have current guidance on primary care offices running rapid flu tests in-house during the pandemic?
   1. Rapid flu tests will be a valuable aid to managing illness this winter, but unfortunately a positive flu test would not eliminate the possibility of co-infection with SARS-CoV-2.
   2. So, testing symptomatic patients in an office setting would require precautions for COVID-19, both in specimen collection and processing. Guidelines are available from CDC and local health departments.
8. Pregnancy and vaccination?
   1. Currently no vaccines are being intentionally studied in pregnant women.
   2. However, pregnant women are at higher risk of complications for COVID-19 disease as well as adverse pregnancy outcomes.
   3. Once a vaccine receives authorization or approval, ACIP/CDC likely will provide further guidance for vaccination of pregnant or breastfeeding women.
      1. One possible scenario could be to list pregnancy and breastfeeding as precautions but not contraindications to vaccination, recognizing the lack of data but also weighing infection risks to pregnant mothers.
9. Is there any testing there other than symptomatic patients through the ED?
   1. CNH laboratory services provides testing for a variety of patients, both symptomatic and asymptomatic, with the latter primarily involving situations such as testing prior to operative and other procedures.
   2. Currently CNH does not offer drive-through testing for the public.
10. Would it be advisable to surveillance screen with covid testing our staff/employees in our clinic on a weekly/biweekly basis? if so, PCR or antigen testing?
    1. This approach generally is not recommended.
    2. CDC has testing recommendations for a variety of circumstances, see overview at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/testing-overview.html> which includes some specific statements about healthcare providers.
    3. Remember, if the rate of infection in a population is low, positive tests may be more likely to be false rather than representing true infection.
    4. Prevention efforts in general should focus on screening for exposures and symptoms.
11. What is the vaccine distribution criteria and are doctors required to get the shot like flu shots?
    1. Vaccine distribution is managed at the federal level in terms of state allocations, and then individual states will make their own decisions about priorities and distribution.
    2. After much study and input from multiple interest groups including the general public.
    3. Detailed discussion of this guidance is available from the CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations-process.html>.

Note that COVID-19 epidemiology is changing rapidly and therefore recommendations may change. This information is current as of December 5, 2020.