Ask the Expert Q&A:

6/12/20: Summer Fever; Lyme or Covid? (Schreiber & El Chebib)

What is the sensitivity of throat versus NP PCR testing? I do not think we have exact numbers but from previous studies that involved swabs for viral infections from NP vs throat, the yield from the NP swabs are much better when compared to those from the throat.

How likely and when will a 2nd wave hit? Specifically, will public schools and universities open up in Aug/Sept and how likely will they have to close in the fall and winter? Given the data from the other states that opened up earlier, a spike in cases is expected. The extent of the spike will depend on how much people will stick with the social distancing and masking. During the fall, I think we will have much testing capabilities and contact tracing and I feel that schools and universities will open. It will be important to continue social distancing and masking come this fall and winter.

In line with the above question, can we do a group discussion involving you, some reps from the ER, some reps from the Hospitalist group so we can come up with best practices for children in CT. You don’t need to read this question out loud but just an idea that may help all of us. That is a great idea. I will leave that to the group to decide on who needs to tend and when. Thanks

What do you think impact of crowding during recent protests?
In terms of crowding during any event my suggestion is first to try and avoid this if possible. If one must be at an event or rally of some sort that has many people it will be critical to wear a mask at all times and to wash hands frequently. Physical distancing is also still very important so again events that create lack of physical distancing should be avoided.

6/26/20: Return to Schools & Vaccines (Schreiber, Frasinelli, Kutson, Bolduc)

Will Pre-K be reopening in the fall also?
If they are par of a local school district, yes.

Are legislators being contacted about laws regarding exemptions for coronavirus vaccine and attendance at public school?
Legislators are being updated on all correspondence to schools as well as policy guidance.

How does a school handle a child who either refuses to wear a mask in class, or the family doesn’t enforce mask wearing? What happens to those kids?
When children are back in school, and a child develops 102 degree fever during the day and cough and is sent home: How long should he be kept out of school if he has a specific diagnosis, of say strep throat, or if no specific do is made and he has respiratory symptoms.
Does Covid testing positive or negative change your response?
What do we do about close contacts in school?

Reopening Guidelines will be released next week to address more specific concerns
Is the flu vaccine safe for people with a severe latex allergy?
Yes the flu vaccine is safe for people with a severe latex allergy.

Unfortunately many EMR including OP still not compatible with CT whiz.
I would encourage you to visit the CT WiZ home page or create a ticket: https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Immunizations/ALL-ABOUT-CT-WiZ You can also e-mail our registry coordinator Nancy Sharova: nancy.sharova@ct.gov

Will flu vaccine be free for children 18 and under? and at certain locations?
Yes the flu vaccine is available for all children including those with private insurance up through the age of 18 years of age.

Can the medical providers and APP’s partner with our community pediatricians to help vaccinate CT Children?
I think it will take the efforts of all providers across the state to catch children up. DPH is working with the state AAP to facilitate this.

Can you address the issue of the flu vaccine only having 40-50% effectiveness?
Flu vaccine effectiveness has always been an issue but the main value of flu vaccines is in preventing severe illness and mortality. That being said a vaccine is of no use if it doesn't get administered.

7/17/20: Supporting Adolescents and Young Adults During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Schreiber & MacCormac)

Resources:
https://www.voicesofyouth.org/campaign/covid-19-and-youth-mental-health
https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-for-adolescents-and-youth-related-to-covid-19

7/24/20: Intimate Partner Violence and COVID-19 (Schreiber & Starr-Frechette)

Can you comment on how school opening can possibly work to maintain the flattened curve that CT achieved?
I think with temps on entrance, co-horting, masks, and staggered classes it might be possible to have a hybrid in class and virtual model.

Can you discuss the new travel policy?
Please see the new policy which conforms to the CT mandates on the intranet.

Do you feel that CT's numbers are accurate with the recent delays in testing results, with results taking 7-10 days to come back? Do you think it will have any effect on us containing this if the numbers start to rise and we may not know it?
I think there may be a slight delay in seeing an up-tick but CT is watching pretty closely compared to other states and our numbers are so small we can track well.

My husband, the real estate lawyer has a theory as to why younger children don’t seem to spread covid - they are too short!! Their respiratory droplets are not reaching our faces! Do we yet know how many younger children actually have the disease?
We know that younger kids in infected households do not acquire the infection as easily as older kids and adults and we do not know why that said in Florida thousands of kids are infected we just do not understand this yet.

Many of us are helping our schools develop plans. One question that came to me was.....if one child is sent home from school due to possible covid symptoms, should the sibling also be sent home and quarantined unless there is a negative covid test or positive strep etc.
I can only give you my opinion in that I am not sure that is practical and with daily temps and masks maybe we do not have to do that.

How is mandatory quarantine of out of state travelers enforced in CT? Is it by honor system? If so, how effective is that?
Well it is America and we struggle with this kind of thing. Right now we count on people to fill out the form and self quarantine. Some will and some will not which is why we need to keep our physical distancing and mask use up.

Any suggestions for office planning for administering Flu vaccines this year? The usual method of family flu clinics seems problematic when we are trying to social distance/ keep traffic flow down in our offices?
Any way we can screen for temp wear masks do the clinics while our community spread is very low still.

If an employee is coming from over seas can we also test or only quarantine?
They should quarantine and I think can be tested here and quarantine until results are back.

7/31/20: Impact of Covid-19 on out Inner-City Youth
(Schreiber, Warren-Dias, Ruiz)

What is the training and qualifications for a Certified Recovery Coach?
https://hhcbehavioralhealth.org/programs-services/recovery-leadership-academy
- 80 Hour Course that prepares persons in recovery from a psychiatric or substance use disorder, or family members of people in recovery, to take an exam to become a certified Recovery Support Specialist (RSS)
- Recovery Support Specialists work in behavioral health systems across the state using their own experience with recovery to support those seeking or currently receiving treatment for mental illness or substance use

9/18/20: Mental Health in the Era of COVID (Schreiber, Santos)

What do you think of the "herd mentality" approach to the pandemic?
The challenge with this idea is that around 60% of the population needs to be infected to achieve herd immunity. At that level of infection it is hundreds of thousands of more deaths.

Which type of test does the Canton CVS use?
I do not know which test they are suing although I have heard it is PCR. One needs to check with CVS to determine this.
Several studies state that at day 10 the virus is no longer infective and the DPH recommendation for return to work is at day 10 if afebrile for 24 hours and improvement in symptoms! Yes the recommendation by DPH and CDC is 24 hrs no fever AND 10 days since symptoms first appeared assuming symptom free or "improved" day 10

How do we know the changes are significant for depression and anxiety, not just they are please? A year ago, the rates of depression and anxiety were around 10%, now it is up to 50% for some age groups. That is statistically significant. We are starting to see more data come out of China that is showing these trends as well and I anticipate we will start to see more US data in the next couple months.

Is there a phone number for access mental health? ACCESS Mental Health CT is a program that offers free, timely consultative services for PCPs seeking assistance in providing behavioral health care to children and adolescents under the age of 19 years, irrespective of insurance. Hartford Hospital Hub 855-561-7135; Wheeler Clinic Hub 855-631-9835; Yale Child Study Hub 844-751-8955