

## Run of show

### Welcome from Lt. Governor Gray:

- The bi-weekly series hosted every other Monday starting, February 8, 2021 from 12pm – 1pm will feature community, non-profit, and business leaders from across Vermont.
- Each “Seat at the Table” meeting will be open to the public, lawmakers and press and will highlight topical issues facing Vermont communities.
- This first “Seat at the Table” will highlight the diverse and evolving needs of Vermonters linked to broadband access. The COVID-19 pandemic laid everything bare. Most notably, the essentialness of broadband to the economic and social well-being of Vermonters.
- This pandemic has changed the way Vermonters access services, learning, health, economic opportunity and civic engagement and the ways in which the state can unite in action and a readiness plan across impacted communities and groups to close the broadband gap.

### Speakers:

Jay Nichols, Vermont Principles’ Association

Betsy Bishop, Vermont Chamber of Commerce

Jessa Bernard, Vermont Medical Society

Philene Taormina, AARP-VT

Zach Tomanelli, VT Public Interest Research Group (VPIRG)

### Speaker 1: Jay Nichols

- How has the pandemic and the increased necessity for remote learning impacted the learning gap between students?
- At some point, children will be able to return to “in person” learning do you anticipate that aspects of remote learning are here to stay? What do you see as a silver-lining if there is one?

### Speaker 2: Betsy Bishop

- Much of Vermont's professional workforce is working from home, needing strong broadband connection to communicate. How is that working?
- What are you hearing from businesses about future broadband needs?

### Speaker 3: Jessa Bernard

- Hi Molly – I don’t have specific questions in mind, but the main issue we see from our members’ perspective is that many patients still lack broadband access so they cannot participate in audio-visual telehealth visits. Luckily, during the pandemic there has also been insurance coverage for phone-only visits but we don’t know how long that will continue (we’re working on that, as well). So, as with all of these other services, it’s a real equity issue. We know older Vermonters and BIPOC community are more likely to lack access:  
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2774488>
- **Conclusions and Relevance** In this cohort study of patients scheduled for primary care and medical specialty ambulatory telemedicine visits at a large academic health system during the early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, older patients, Asian patients, and non-English-speaking patients had lower rates of telemedicine use, while older patients, female patients, Black, Latinx, and poorer patients had less video use. Inequities in accessing telemedicine care are present, which warrant further attention.

## Run of show

### **Speaker 4: Philene Taormina**

- Why is the availability of high-speed internet important, now more than ever, to ensure older adults have the resources they need to age comfortably and independently?
- How has the pandemic changed transparency and access to government for AARP VT members that have high-speed internet access?

### **Speaker 5: Zach Tomanelli**

- From VPIRG's perspective what impact has the lack of broadband access had on civic engagement, or alternatively, what have we learned from this pandemic about civic engagement?
- We've talked a lot about the challenges, what does VPIRG see as the best solution? Is there a case for community-led response?

### **Format: 12:30pm**

12:20 Speakers log-in

12:30 Lt. Governor Introduces topic, first speaker, asks first question

12:35 First speaker: **Jay Nichols**

12:37 Lt. Governor introduces second speaker, asks first question

12:38 Second speaker: **Betsy Bishop**

12:40 Lt. Governor introduces third speaker, asks first question

12:41 Third speaker: **Jessa Bernard**

12:43 Lt. Governor introduces fourth speaker, asks first question

12:44 Fourth speaker: **Philene Taormina**

12:46 Lt. Governor introduces fifth speaker, asks first question

12:47 Fifth speaker: **Zach Tomanelli**

12:49 Lt. Governor asks second question of first speaker

12:50 First speaker: **Jay Nichols**

12:52 Lt. Governor asks second question of second speaker

12:53 Second speaker: **Betsy Bishop**

12:55 Lt. Governor asks second question of third speaker

12:56 Third speaker: **Jessa Bernard**

12:58 Lt. Governor asks second question of fourth speaker

12:59 Fourth speaker: **Philene Taormina**

1:01 Governor asks second question of fifth speaker

1:02 Fifth speaker: **Zach Tomanelli**

1:04 Q & A

1:25 Concluding remark/last word each panelist. Lt. Governor thanks everyone announces date and time of next "Seat at the Table"