

# 3.35: The Secrets of Vermont in Taming the COVID-19 Pandemic with Anne Sosin

↗ Type	<u>Plenary Session</u>
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## We Discuss:

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- Conversation with Anne Sosin [1:07]
  - Schools [9:56]
  - Social Media [12:50]
  - Empathetic Messaging [19:36]
  - Reticence [28:18]
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## Plenary Session 3.35 Show Notes

### Overview

#### Conversation with Anne Sosin [1:07]

- **Introduction**
  - Anne is a Policy Fellow at Dartmouth
    - Anne earned her BA from Dartmouth College
      - She earned her MPH from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- **Vermont**
  - Vermont has led the country consistently at low rates of infection

- **One way Vermont achieved this was by adopting a *phased approach***
  1. During the shutdown, the state scaled up testing and contact tracing while also prioritizing how to sustain behavioral changes
  2. Vermont has prioritized its most vulnerable populations from the start of the pandemic (e.g., poor, essential workforce, prisons, elderly)
    - Vermont has had a number of policies, programs and strategies to target these populations
      - It housed its homeless populations using an expanded form of its motel voucher situation
  3. Vermont has had an eviction moratorium in place
  4. Vermont has targeted its testing to rural communities, rather than having sites that are inaccessible to rural locations where transportation represents a major barrier to health care
    - If there was a local outbreak, the state brought in social services to ensure that there was nutritional assistance
  5. Vermont developed policy responses to offset what we know are the secondary impacts of those restrictions (e.g., economic impacts)
    - The state has used its CARES Act funding to target the most effective sectors of the economy
  6. Messaging
    - The State always conveyed the sense of hope and agency through collective action
  7. Specificity
    - Data that was produced has actually been translated into the community
- **Schools [9:56]**
  - Schools have emerged as key leaders in the public health response in Vermont
    - Leadership from educational faculty played an important role in terms of accountability for some of the public health measures in place
- **Social Media [12:50]**

- Anne believes there's been a privileging of certain disciplines over other disciplines
  - Instead, it is more important to collaborate across disciplines to create robust biomedical research

"Rather than fight about epistemic boundaries, I think we need to think how do we collaborate productively across those boundaries." - Sosin

- **Empathetic Messaging [19:36]**

- We're not the experts of communities experiences nor individual's lives
  - The approach to public health strategies needs to come from meeting people's needs and structuring safer alternatives for social connection
    - We are asking for incredible sacrifices and we need to continue to be creatively thinking about how we sustain containing the virus while recognizing people's needs
- Op-Ed: Don't Cancel Christmas
  - MEDPAGETODAY article by Prasad
    - We need to help people understand what the real risks are and how they can structure safer alternatives for the holiday

- **Reticence [28:18]**

- Anguish affects people differently
  - Anguish makes some people proselytize and other very sensitive, looking to be hurt or outraged by the latest infraction
- Anne believes it is important to have a conversation around *hope* in order to combat anguish

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