

**Barbara Neal, Executive Director - Vermont Enhanced 911 Board  
Testimony at House Committee on Energy and Technology  
1 April 2020**

**Enhanced 911 Board COVID-19 Response**

- The statewide 911 system is operating normally.
  - The system is configured so that each of Vermont’s six Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) “backs up” the other five. Calls that cannot be answered in the primary PSAP automatically and seamlessly roll to an available call-taker in another PSAP.
  - The geographic diversity of the six Public Safety Answering Points helps prevent illness from impacting all centers/personnel at the same time.
- All Board staff efforts are focused on ensuring continued operational integrity of the 911 system including any needed support to our six Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs).
- Board staff are monitoring call volumes daily and distributing that information to PSAPs and our federal partners at Homeland Security’s Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA)
  - Since 3/15, call volume has been about 74% of average daily call volume.
  - 96% of calls are being answered within 10 seconds (well above the national standard that 90% of calls be answered within 10 seconds)
  - No staffing shortages have been reported.
- Call handling protocols were updated in early March at the direction of the Board’s medical control (Vermont Department of Health) to include appropriate screening questions related to travel history and exposure. These questions are designed to protect Vermont’s first responders.
- All PSAPs have instituted restricted access policies to ensure only healthy – and essential – personnel are allowed entry into communications centers. It is critical to keep these centers – and the people in them – healthy.
- Weekly calls with all PSAPs are ongoing to ensure coordination of planning and resources.
  - Currently 110 certified call-takers employed among the six PSAPs. Anyone of them could work at any PSAP with proper permissions.
  - Contingency plans are being finalized this week to address the loss of one or more PSAPs due to staffing shortages and/or closure of PSAP.