



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Nov. 26, 2021

CONTACT:

nancy.nydham@dph.ga.gov

New COVID Variant Reinforces Need for Vaccination and Testing

Atlanta – The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) is closely monitoring the emergence of a new COVID variant first detected in southern Africa. The variant has not been detected in Georgia at this time.

Named Omicron by the World Health Organization (WHO), the variant has a large number of mutations. Scientists are studying the variant to determine how quickly and easily it spreads, whether it causes more severe illness and how well the current COVID vaccines will protect against it. So far, a few dozen COVID cases caused by Omicron have been identified in South Africa, Hong Kong, Israel and Belgium.

“What is known is that COVID vaccination helps stop transmission of infection which prevents new variants from emerging,” said Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H., commissioner of the Georgia Department of Public Health. “Vaccination is more important than ever with the emergence of this new variant and the holidays just around the corner.”

All Georgians over the age of 5 are now eligible for COVID vaccination. Booster doses of vaccine are recommended for adults 18 and older who have completed their first series of vaccine.

Individuals who have symptoms of COVID or who may have been exposed to someone with COVID should get tested. Based on available data, PCR testing can detect the presence of the Omicron variant.

To find a COVID vaccine or COVID testing location near you log on to dph.ga.gov.

DPH will continue to monitor information about Omicron and provide updates as new information becomes available.

For updates on COVID-19, follow @GaDPH and @GovKemp on Twitter and @GaDPH and @GovKemp on Facebook.

###