



NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT:

nancy.nydham@dph.ga.gov

Omicron Variant Detected in Georgia

New Variant Reinforces the Need for Vaccination and Testing

Atlanta – The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) has confirmed the first case of COVID-19 caused by the Omicron variant **in Georgia**. The individual recently traveled from South Africa and developed mild symptoms and subsequently tested positive for COVID-19. Genomic sequencing confirmed the presence of the Omicron variant. The individual is isolating at home and contact tracing is underway to identify close contacts at risk of infection. This is the first identified in-state case of Omicron. DPH was notified Dec. 3 of a Georgia resident currently in New Jersey who tested positive for the Omicron variant.

Scientists continue to study the Omicron variant to determine how quickly and easily it spreads, whether it causes more severe illness and how well the current COVID vaccines protect against it.

“Vaccination is key to preventing further transmission of COVID-19 and helps prevent new variants like Omicron from emerging,” said Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H., commissioner of the Georgia Department of Public Health. “It also is important to remember that even as Omicron is emerging, we are still in the midst of a pandemic currently being fueled by the Delta variant.”

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 completed their first series of vaccine at least six months ago. The CDC also recommends general prevention measures such as wearing a mask in public settings, staying 6 feet from others, avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces, and frequently washing your hands to protect against COVID-19.

Individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19 or who may have been exposed to someone with COVID should get tested.

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

DPH will continue to monitor Omicron developments 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.

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