NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **CONTACT:**
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Omicron Variant Detected in Georgia
Third Confirmed Case in Georgia Resident

Atlanta – The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) has confirmed the Omicron variant in an unvaccinated metro Atlanta resident with no recent international travel history. The individual has mild COVID symptoms and is isolating at home. Contact tracing is underway to identify close contacts at risk of COVID-19 infection.

Previously, two cases of the Omicron variant were confirmed in metro Atlanta residents. One of those individuals was tested in New Jersey and is recovering there.

The omicron variant has now been detected in patients in at least 21 U.S. states and in dozens of countries around the world. Preliminary data show that Omicron may cause less severe illness but may spread more easily than the Delta variant. Scientists are still researching how well the current COVID vaccines or natural immunity hold up against Omicron, and caution that it is too early to make conclusions about Omicron because there is not enough data available.

More than 1,000 new cases of COVID are reported daily in Georgia, 99% of which are Delta variant and predominantly in unvaccinated individuals. Vaccination is crucial to stopping transmission of COVID and preventing the emergence of variants.

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 Pfizer or Moderna vaccine at least six months ago or two months ago for J&J vaccine. (CDC recommendations for booster doses of Pfizer vaccine are currently pending for 16- and 17-year-olds.) 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.

NOTE: DPH will continue to monitor Omicron and provide updates as new information becomes available. DPH will not issue news releases on every future case but will provide the number of confirmed cases or percentages when requested, as we have done with other variants.

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

We protect lives.