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THE FIRST CASE OF THE OMICRON VARIANT HAS BEEN CONFIRMED IN NEVADA
Local health officials say news is not cause for alarm, urge continued prevention measures

WINNEMUCCA, Nev.— Nevada’s first case of the COVID-19 virus caused by the Omicron variant has been confirmed in Las Vegas.

That’s according to the Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory which identified the specimen on Tuesday, December 14.

State laboratories in southern and northern Nevada continue to provide genome sequencing for positive COVID-19 cases to determine the presence of variants in the community, including the Omicron. For now, at least, the Delta variant continues to play the dominant role in Nevada.

That may change as the Omicron variant spreads, said Humboldt County Health Officer Charles Stringham, MD. He told health board members at a December 13 meeting that he has never heard of a virus with the transmissible power of the Omicron.

Still, Dr. Stringham said the new variant should not cause alarm: “While it is highly transmissible,” he said, “we know how to fight it; the same precautionary measures apply.”

He especially urged residents to get fully vaccinated; those age 16 and older should also receive a booster dose. Recipients of the two-dose Moderna or Pfizer vaccines should receive a booster six months following their second shot; recipients of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine should receive a booster two months following their initial vaccination.

Dr. Stringham further urged residents to wear a mask in public indoor settings, regardless of vaccination status, and to stay home and get tested if they are sick. Frequent hand washing and getting a flu vaccine are also recommended to help keep people healthier this holiday season.

Those who have symptoms or who test positive for COVID-19 should follow quarantine and self-isolation guidance.

The Clark County individual who tested positive for the Omicron variant is a fully-vaccinated female in her mid-20s. She has not received a booster dose of vaccine and the case is under investigation.

“Vaccinated people can still get infected with COVID-19,” Dr. Stringham reminded, “but the vaccines do dramatically lower the probability of severe illness, hospitalization and death, so adding that layer of protection is our primary focus.”

On November 26, 2021, the World Health Organization classified the Omicron as a variant of concern. New variants develop when the virus can replicate well and travel from person to person; vaccination helps slow that process.

Additional information about the Omicron variant is available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website [Omicron Variant: What You Need to Know](#).

Humboldt County has established a COVID-19 vaccine recorded information line in both English and Spanish. Call (775) 675-6221 to hear the latest about vaccine allocations, local distribution opportunities and changes as they occur. The line is updated with new information every Friday (not including holidays), or as needed. Information is also available by emailing vaccine@humboldtcountynev.gov.

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