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State identifies first Omicron COVID-19 case

SANTA FE – On Monday, the New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) announced its first identified case of the COVID-19 Omicron variant. The case was identified on Sunday, December 12 and is a female adult in Bernalillo County. The individual reported recent domestic travel to a state with reported cases of Omicron. The individual was seen in a local emergency room and discharged stable to home. DOH is currently conducting a thorough case investigation.

Omicron has been identified as a variant of concern by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The CDC describes a variant of concern as “A variant for which there is evidence of an increase in transmissibility, more severe disease (for example, increased hospitalizations or deaths), significant reduction in neutralization by antibodies generated during previous infection or vaccination, reduced effectiveness of treatments or vaccines, or diagnostic detection failures.”

The Omicron variant has been confirmed in at least 30 states and the District of Columbia, as well as more than 60 countries. Omicron appears to be spreading faster than the currently-dominant Delta variant.

DOH reminds New Mexicans that the best way to protect themselves and their loved ones continues to be vaccination. Everyone age 5 and over is eligible for vaccine, and everyone 16+ is eligible for a booster shot. New Mexicans can register for vaccine appointments at vaccineNM.org. Vaccines are provided at no cost, and neither insurance nor ID is required.

In addition, the Department encourages New Mexicans to continue proven public safety practices, including masking, avoiding crowds, and washing hands frequently.

NMDOH

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The Department of Health works to promote health and wellness, improve health outcomes, and deliver services to all New Mexicans. As New Mexico’s largest state agency, DOH offers public health services in all 33 counties and collaborates with 23 Native American tribes, Pueblos and nations.