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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 2, 2022

New Omicron COVID-19 boosters offer enhanced protection

Updated boosters expected to be available next week

SANTA FE- The New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) recommends the use of the first booster vaccine designed specifically to protect against the original COVID-19 and the most common form of COVID-19 in New Mexico, the BA.5 Omicron subvariant. Doses are expected to begin shipping over the next few days and arriving at health care providers across New Mexico next week.

“We’ve added another tool to help safeguard us against severe illness against COVID-19,” said **David R. Scrase, M.D., acting DOH secretary**. “The new booster was specifically designed to address Omicron subvariants.”

According to our most recent data, the BA.5 subvariant accounts for an estimated 80% of the COVID-19 cases in New Mexico. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued Emergency Use Authorization for the Omicron COVID-19 booster August 31, 2022.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and DOH recommend the Omicron booster manufactured by Pfizer-BioNTech for people age 12 and older. They recommend the Omicron booster by Moderna for adults age 18 and older.

The new vaccines are to be administered as a single booster dose to those who previously completed a primary series of COVID-19 vaccines and those who have had one or two booster doses. Omicron boosters can only be administered if it has been at least two months since a person’s most recent vaccination.

The new vaccines replace previously authorized monovalent mRNA boosters (Pfizer and Moderna) for people age 12 and older.

Following CDC guidance, DOH is no longer scheduling appointments for the Monovalent mRNA COVID-19 as a booster and individuals have been asked to wait until the new Omicron booster is available.

The federal government allotted DOH initial orders totaling 54,400 doses of bivalent boosters. Those initial orders will arrive in the coming days.

DOH will place additional orders weekly as needed.

The DOH encourages individuals and families to sign up for their vaccine appointment at vaccineNM.org, vaccineNM.org/kids, vaccine.gov, or through their personal medical provider or pharmacist.

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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.