

Dept. of Health Services: DHS provides update on Omicron variant

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The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) and the City of Milwaukee Health Department are investigating a COVID-19 outbreak from a wedding in Milwaukee County on November 27.

There are currently 12 confirmed cases among California residents who attended the event. One of the individuals attended the wedding upon return from international travel. A California State lab used genomic sequencing to identify that 5 of the 12 people diagnosed with COVID-19, were infected with the Omicron variant (B.1.1.529). Genomic sequencing data is not yet available for the other cases. The 12 individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 are between the ages of 18-49. All individuals were vaccinated, and most had received boosters. They are mildly symptomatic and no one has been hospitalized.

DHS and the City of Milwaukee Health Department are actively reaching out to all Wisconsinites who were close contacts, and isolation and quarantine protocols are being followed.

“Although the news that this variant is continuing to spread throughout the country is concerning, it should not be a cause for panic. We know COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing serious illness and death,” said DHS Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake. “That’s why it’s critical that all eligible Wisconsinites get vaccinated or get their booster as soon as possible and follow public health best practices to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe.”

DHS will continue to provide updates as additional information is available.

The Omicron variant is now being detected around the country and the world. To

protect yourself most effectively against COVID-19, including the Omicron variant, it is essential to get vaccinated, get your booster when eligible, and continue public health practices. Vaccination combined with public health practices, such as wearing a mask, getting tested if you know you have been exposed to COVID-19 or are feeling symptomatic, and staying home when sick, can help prevent further spread.

Everyone ages 5 and up can receive a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine. Additionally, the CDC now recommends that everyone 18 and older receive a booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine at least six months after having received their second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or two months after their single dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Vaccines are free and you do not need an ID or health insurance to get one. To find a vaccine location in your community visit [Vaccines.gov\(link is external\)](https://www.vaccines.gov), or call 211 or 877-947-2211.

For up-to-date information about Wisconsin's COVID-19 response, visit the [DHS COVID-19](#) webpage. We encourage you to follow @DHSWI on [Facebook\(link is external\)](#), [Twitter\(link is external\)](#), or dhs.wi on [Instagram\(link is external\)](#) for more information on COVID-19.