



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.

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Public Health Advisory

Regarding: Omicron variant

Background

The global spread of the new Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2, first detected in Southern Africa in mid-November, is a source of concern in our local pandemic response. Marin County Public Health is working closely with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to monitor the variant which has not yet been detected in California or the United States.

Vaccines continue to be our best way through the pandemic by safely protecting us against severe illness from COVID-19 and its variants.

Given rapid global spread and likely high levels of infectivity, the Omicron variant is expected to be present regionally in the coming days. Important features of this variant are not yet well understood, including severity of illness and the level of protection conferred by current vaccinations or history of prior COVID-19 infection.

Actions taken by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

Travel has been suspended for non-U.S. citizens who have been present in South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia or Zimbabwe within the last 14 days. Citizens returning from these areas in the past 14 days must follow CDC recommendations to get tested 3-5 days after arrival, quarantine for 7 days even if testing negative, and isolate for 10 days if COVID-19 symptoms develop.

CDPH and jurisdictions with international airports are developing regulations for travelers into California and will provide more information in the coming days.

Actions requested by Marin County Clinicians:

- Increase your vaccination and booster efforts to ensure that all residents have access to safe, effective, and free vaccines.
- If you are not able to provide vaccination to your eligible patients, appointments may be available at GetVaccinatedMarin.org.
- Obtain a travel history for all patients presenting with symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

- For any patients with compatible symptoms who have traveled to the African countries listed above within the last 14 days, contact Marin County Public Health by phone (415) 473-2957 or email COVID19CDLead@marincounty.org to review the case. If the case meets criteria, MCPH will assist in routing the specimen for WGS.
- More guidance for clinicians regarding testing and reporting will be forthcoming in the coming days.

References:

[CDPH Fact Sheet: Omicron Variant](#) (November 28, 2021)

[CDC Statement on B.1.1.529 \(Omicron variant\)](#) [November 26, 2021]