



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

### Background

While Marin County has progressed beyond the most acute phase of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, national and global surges in COVID-19 activity and the emergence of variants of concern (VOC) require [ongoing viral surveillance](#), including whole genome sequencing. Whole genome sequencing (WGS) is a laboratory procedure that identifies unique genetic sequences of the virus.

Genetic variants of SARS-CoV-2 have been emerging and circulating around the world throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) established a [SARS-CoV-2 Interagency Group \(SIG\)](#) to characterize emerging variants and actively monitor their potential impact on critical SARS-CoV-2 countermeasures, including vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics. Local policies to control transmission also rely upon situational awareness of emerging variants. The B.1.1.7, B.1.351, P.1, B.1.427, and B.1.429 variants circulating in the United States are classified as variants of concern.

Currently, all United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) approved vaccines are showing good or excellent efficacy against circulating variants of concern.

### Actions Requested of Providers

Marin County Public Health has been conducting viral surveillance activities and is seeking to expand our efforts. Clinicians can assist this process by referring cases of interest.

1. Identify COVID-19 cases that may be eligible for WGS, including:
  - Vaccine Breakthrough Case of Interest (VBCI). A VBCI is a person who has SARS-CoV-2 RNA detected by a molecular test (e.g., PCR or NAAT) on a respiratory specimen collected  $\geq 14$  days after completing their COVID-19 vaccination series (i.e.,  $\geq 14$  days following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series or  $\geq 14$  days following receipt of one dose of a single-dose FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine).
  - Any hospitalization due to COVID-19 infection.
  - Reinfection with COVID-19 following recovery. A positive SARS-CoV-2 PCR or NAAT  $> 90$  days after first positive test.
  - Travel Associated: (1) case with recent international travel or (2) case with contact to someone that had recent international travel.
2. Prior to testing a patient who may be eligible for WGS, contact Marin County Public Health by phone (415) 473-2957 or email [COVID19CDLead@marincounty.org](mailto:COVID19CDLead@marincounty.org) to review the case. If the case meets criteria, MCPH will assist in routing the specimen for WGS.
3. MCPH will provide updates on actively circulating VOC and related guidance through communications and advisories.