FIRST FOUR CONFIRMED CASES OF OMICRON COVID-19 VARIANT DETECTED IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – Santa Barbara County Public Health Department has received confirmation of the first four cases of COVID-19 related to the Omicron variant (B.1.1.529).

All four cases were under 30 years of age. Three of the four cases were in South County, one received two doses of Pfizer, and the other three do not have vaccine records in CAIR, the state immunization database.

Additional contact investigation and contact tracing efforts are underway to gather information, and following standard procedures, close contacts have been asked to quarantine.

“The detection of these four Omicron cases validates our sense of urgency about vaccination and boosters in our local community. Vaccination and boosters for every eligible community member continues to be the number one tool we have to stop the spread of this virus and prevent serious illness in those who do get COVID-19,” shared Van Do-Reynoso, County Public Health Director.

“Given the prevalence of Omicron cases throughout the nation and California, we can expect that the variant is circulating in Santa Barbara County. However, these four cases are the first confirmed from sampling.”

COVID-19 vaccines have been effective against earlier variants of the virus and appear to be effective against this new variant as well, especially against serious illness and death. Find a COVID-19 vaccination site today by visiting https://publichealthsbc.org/vaccine/.

Testing continues to be an important element in early detection of infection. Community members are encouraged to get tested if they traveled to U.S. locations with high transmission rates or if they’ve traveled internationally. Additionally, testing is recommended for persons who have attended crowded gathering with unvaccinated people. If you test positive, be sure to isolate and remind your close contacts with symptoms to isolate regardless of vaccination status.

If you are unable to book an immediate appointment for COVID-19 testing, consider an at-home testing option. These at-home tests are the next best option, especially if you experience symptoms. Due to increased demand for at home antigen tests, supply may be limited at local pharmacies, grocery stores, and other locations.

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County Public Health: www.PublicHealthSBC.org, Twitter and Facebook
County of Santa Barbara: www.CountyofSB.org, Twitter, Facebook
2-1-1 Call Center: Dial 211 if calling from within the county; or call (800) 400-1572 if calling from outside the area.