

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19 Omicron Variant Found in Nebraska

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has received reports that the COVID-19 variant known as omicron, which was first found in South Africa, has been identified in the southeastern part of the state. No cases have yet been identified in the SWNPHD area.

According to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), there were 6 cases identified in Nebraska that were all connected to travel outside of the United States. Health officials are gathering information about this variant to find out whether disease severity is similar, milder, or more severe than with the other variants, given the large number of omicron mutations.

For now, SWNPHD continues to recommend the same precautions to protect from infection as with the other variants of COVID-19. This includes avoiding close contact, crowds, and closed spaces, wearing a mask when these cannot be avoided, frequent handwashing, and vaccination for eligible ages.

SWNPHD had 176 new cases of COVID-19 reported from November 30 to December 6, 2021, with an average of 180 cases per week in the last 30 days. A breakdown by age includes: 0 to 19 – 19; 20 to 29 – 38; 30 to 39 – 19; 40 to 49 – 17; 50 to 59 – 20; 60 to 69 – 32; 70 to 79 – 23; 80 and over – 8. The total number of COVID cases is 6,003.

SWNPHD is conducting a survey about what is affecting the health of residents in the district. The survey is available at the website www.swhealth.ne.gov/featured/2 where residents can share their experiences and concerns regarding access to healthcare, health risks for their area, and progress or barriers they have encountered. Local pharmacies also have a card with the survey link available, and paper surveys are available at SWNPHD.

SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th St (1 block north of Arby's) in McCook and can be reached by calling 308-345-4223. The website www.swhealth.ne.gov contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties.

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