

COVID-19 B.1.1.7 VARIANT DETECTED IN WEXFORD COUNTY RESIDENT

March 17, 2021 – District Health Department #10 (DHD#10) was notified that the COVID-19 B.1.1.7 variant was detected in a positive Wexford County case, the first of its kind in our ten-county jurisdiction. The case was identified through routine active surveillance by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. The individual tested positive in mid-February, so is no longer contagious, and is currently wintering out of state.

B.1.1.7. appears to be more contagious, but so far there is no indication that it affects the clinical outcomes or disease severity compared to the SARS-CoV-2 virus that has been circulating across the United States for months. However, a higher rate of transmission could increase the number of people who need to be hospitalized or who die due to COVID-19 should the new variant begin circulating widely in Michigan. To date, the variant was identified in 50 states and jurisdictions in the U.S., with 616 cases in Michigan as of March 11, 2021.

“The identification of this more contagious variant in our area reminds us that we must continue to take steps to slow the spread of COVID-19 by wearing a mask, staying six feet apart, and avoiding indoor gatherings,” said Dr. Jennifer Morse, Medical Director for the health department. “Anyone who has any symptoms or may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus, either here or during travel, should get tested and quarantine themselves,” she added.

Important precautions to protect against COVID include:

- Get vaccinated for COVID-19 when available and eligible
- Wear a mask covering your nose and mouth when around others
- Stay six feet apart from others
- Wash hands often
- Ventilate indoor spaces

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, have been exposed to COVID-19, or recently have traveled, get tested. You can find testing locations at www.mi.gov/coronavirustest or by calling 211 or the COVID-19 Hotline at 888-535-6136, press 1.

For questions, email us at covid@dhd10.org. For more COVID-19 vaccine information, visit us at www.dhd10.org/covid-19-vaccine. To stay informed, sign up for our Public Health Alert at www.dhd10.org/subscribe.



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