



UNIFIED COMMAND
WALLA WALLA COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
WALLA WALLA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Walla Walla County PIO, 509-524-2916, EOCPIO@co.walla-walla.wa.us

COVID Variant B.1.1.529 Confirmed in Walla Walla County
Reminder to Stay Healthy, Get Vaccinated, Keep our Community Safe

WALLA WALLA, WASH. – The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has been using genome sequencing to identify COVID-19 variants around the state. DOH recently notified Walla Walla County Department of Community Health (DCH) that the COVID variant B.1.1.529 (Omicron) has been identified in COVID specimens collected from the county.

First identified in South Africa, there is still much unknown about the Omicron variant. “It appears the Omicron variant likely will spread more easily than the original COVID-19 virus,” said Public Health Officer Daniel Kaminsky. “While the severity of symptoms does not seem to be as dramatic as previous variants, due to the sheer number of cases, the hospitalization rate is still being driven upward.”

While cases surge throughout the state and in the county, it is still important to take precautionary measures when necessary. Walla Walla County DCH continues to recommend that every eligible person gets vaccinated. The vaccine is safe, effective, and free to everyone ages 5 years and older. Wear a tight-fitting mask and social distance when possible.

DCH encourages all residents to visit the County COVID website at www.covidwwc.com or text COVIDWW to 888777 for the most up-to-date county COVID information.

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Always working for a safer, healthier, and thriving Walla Walla County