



Public Health
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Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19 Variant Confirmed in Champaign County

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Announces Several Cases of the COVID-19 Variant B.1.1.7

CHAMPAIGN, IL – The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) announces several cases of the COVID-19 variant B.1.1.7, first identified in the United Kingdom, have been confirmed in Champaign County.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), viruses are constantly changing, and this includes SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. These genetic variations occur over time and can lead to the emergence of new variants that may have different characteristics.

According to Dr. Ngozi Ezike, IDPH Director, “With reports of this variant already in many states in the U.S., we anticipated its spread here in Illinois. Early studies have found that this variant spreads more easily than what we have seen with the current prevailing variant. We are following closely to see if there is evidence that infections by this variant cause more severe disease or death. Based on the information available now, the vaccine will still be effective. Continued masking and vaccination when it is your turn remain our best path to defeating this virus as quickly as possible.”

Public health experts are working to better understand the potential impact of this variant, including how the variant spreads and how it affects people who are infected. The same measures that have helped protect our community from COVID-19 will also help protect residents from the variant. Wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet apart from others, avoiding crowds, ventilating indoor spaces, washing hands frequently, and staying home when ill remain the best tools for preventing the spread of this virus, no matter the strain.

For more information on COVID-19, visit www.c-uphd.org.

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