



## CAHAN Disease Notification - SARS-CoV-2 virus variant of concern B.1.1.529 (Omicron)

On November 26, 2021, the World Health Organization designated a new variant, B.1.1.529 (Omicron) as a variant of concern (VOC). The **attached CAHAN** provides key information for health care providers on what we currently know about this variant and recommendations for detecting and reporting cases associated with this variant. Today, a single case of COVID-19 in a traveler returning from South Africa was identified in San Francisco. Please see statements from the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov) and [CDPH](https://www.cdph.ca) for additional information.

Health care providers should ask patients about travel history especially during this winter respiratory virus season. Additionally, the **CDPH requests that health care providers collect and submit specimens for whole genome sequencing from individuals with SARS-CoV-2 virus infection who meet at least one the following criteria:**

- Recent international travel especially to those countries in which the Omicron variant has been detected;
- Exposure to persons with recent international travel especially to countries in which the Omicron variant has been detected;
- Specimens that show S gene target failure/dropout (also called SGTF) by polymerase chain reaction;
- Possible re-infection (i.e., recurrence of symptoms with positive molecular testing at least 90 days after initial infection); or
- Infection >14 days after completing a vaccination series (i.e., two doses of a mRNA Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or one dose of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine).

CDPH encourages continued vigilance for rapid increase in cases or outbreaks that have high attack rates. Specimens can be submitted to the Alameda County Public Health Laboratory (ACPHL) or the CDPH Viral and Rickettsial Disease Laboratory (VRDL) for whole genome sequencing and analysis.

**Laboratory Specimen Submission:** Respiratory specimens may be submitted to the Alameda County Public Health Laboratory (ACPHL) for WGS during normal business hours. For specimen submission instructions, contact ACPHL by phone at 510-382-4300, email at [acphl@acgov.org](mailto:acphl@acgov.org), or download the submittal form from the [ACPHL website](#).

**Cases of COVID-19 suspected or due to the Omicron variant should be reported to the Alameda County Public Health Department.** Health Care providers must complete a [COVID-19-specific Confidential Morbidity Report \(CMR\)](#) for laboratory confirmed cases and fax to (510) 273-3944, or send by secure email to [COVIDreport@acgov.org](mailto:COVIDreport@acgov.org) within 1 business day. More information about COVID-19 reporting for health care providers can be found on the [Reporting Requirements webpage](#).