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City-Cowley County
Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 18, 2022

County Wide COVID-19 Update:

The health department monitors the health of county residents. The following is an update to inform the community of the current status of the COVID-19 pandemic in Cowley County.

Respiratory infections in Cowley County have risen dramatically over the past few weeks.

During the past 4 weeks a sharp increase in new COVID-19 infections has been noted in Cowley County. The new infections are connected to the newest Omicron variant named B.5. Omicron was the COVID-19 variant that resulted in over 3000 new cases this past January. The virus has mutated and once again has become easier to contract than previous variants of the same lineage. The current incubation time for new B.5 cases is shorter on average, manifesting in 2-3 days compared with the 5-6 day incubation period of past variants. This shortened incubation period has resulted in the rapid expansion of new cases during this “spike” in COVID-19 activity. Currently we are seeing 10 – 15 new cases daily in the county. During the first 15 days of July 2022, 177 new cases have been found. Close contact continues to be the pathway of greatest exposure and once again we are seeing families affected by the illness.

Symptoms of a B.5. infection are similar to a severe head cold and seem to include persistent headaches, pronounced body aches, and overall fatigue. People who are ill have reported that they are remaining symptomatic for 8 to 10 days.

The B.5 variant has become much better at skirting existing immune response in people, this ability to mutate has resulted in re-infections for some people who previously were infected and ill.

The B.5 variant has not overwhelmed critical care facilities however it has contributed to the death of two (2) local residents during the past three weeks. Both residents did have additional co-morbidities which were also factors in their passing.

Early detection is key to stopping this wave of new cases.

Any person who begins to feel symptomatic is encouraged to be tested. Home testing kits are still widely available. Daily testing occurs each morning at the Health Department Winfield location and there are still local testing providers in the county that can also provide the service. Call 620-221-1430 if you need to be tested.

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The protocol for steps to take if you become ill HAS NOT changed.

If you do become ill, please do not participate in any group events until after you have fully recovered from your illness. For as long as the pandemic persists Cowley County residents are advised to take all necessary precautions to prevent the contraction and spread of ANY illness.

- Stay home if you feel ill.
- If you develop symptoms of illness, be tested to determine if you are infected.
- When ill you **MUST** stay home and isolate from others so you will not spread the virus or any other illness.
- Wash your hands frequently and use hand sanitizer.
- Clean high touch surfaces with disinfecting cleaners (doors, counters etc.).
- Wear a mask that properly covers your nose and mouth in public.
- Avoid crowds and social gatherings.
- Please be kind to and respectful of others.

For continued information about the current state of the pandemic in Cowley County please refer to the bi-weekly public health updates published by the Health Department and download the City Cowley County Health Department Smart Phone App now available for free.

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