



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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REGARDING: Omicron Surge
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COVID-19 Omicron Variant Identified in the Western U. P. as Cases Surge

Baraga, Gogebic, Houghton, Keweenaw and Ontonagon Counties, MI – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) notified the Western Upper Peninsula Health Department (WUPHD) that the MDHHS Bureau of Laboratories identified the COVID-19 Omicron variant in a Western Upper Peninsula case.

“It is important to know that not all COVID tests are sequenced. With the rapid rise in case counts over the last few days, we can be certain that there are additional cases,” said Kate Beer, Health Officer at WUPHD. “We encourage residents to take precautions by staying home if you are not feeling well, masking in public or crowded spaces, follow quarantine guidelines, and get vaccinated or your booster dose. Vaccinations continue to be our best defense to reduce the severity of symptoms, prevent hospitalizations, and death.”

The WUPHD has posted 396 new COVID-19 cases over the past two days; 38 in Baraga County, 68 in Gogebic County, 260 in Houghton County, 10 in Keweenaw County, and 20 in Ontonagon County. Case counts do not include the numerous positive home tests taken by residents.

With the high transmission rate of the Omicron variant, vaccination is more important than ever. Primary vaccinations are currently open to anyone 5 and older. Boosters are available to those 12 and older. Vaccinations can be scheduled with local providers by calling your local health department office, your physician’s office, pharmacies, or by visiting www.coppercountrystrong.com/vaccine.

Various testing sites are available throughout the district. Visit www.wuphd.org for more information or call 211.

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