

Coronavirus Update: Telebriefing for Institutes of Higher Education

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Today is two years to the day of Los Angeles County's first reported case, and we are now in year 3

The single most important thing we can do as a community to reduce our risk of another surge is to decrease our numbers of unvaccinated people.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

- Reporting 20,866 new confirmed cases of COVID 19 in LAC
- Over past 2 weeks there has been a downward trend in cases and test positivity
- 7-day average dropped to 310 cases /100,000 compared to 380/100,000 a week on Jan. 18
 - This is good movement in the right direction
- Test positive rate decreased to under 14% Monday compared to 17% on Jan. 18
 - These decreases signal that we have passed the peak of Omicron transmission
- However, the numbers are still extraordinarily high
 - Daily case numbers average 25,000 new cases every day
 - 1 out of 7 people tested are coming back positive/infected
- CDC defines high community transmission as over 100
 - We were well below that at one point and we will again
- Unfortunately hospitalizations and deaths continue
 - 4,534 people are hospitalized
 - Number is coming down but still high
- Sadly, deaths increased this past week (91 additional deaths), bringing the total to 28,630

VACCINATION STATUS

- More than 78 percent of residents 12 and over are fully vaccinated
- More than 3M residents have already received their booster
- Vaccination info hotline: (833) 540-0473

MASKS

- Omicron variant is continuing to spread at a rapid pace, even though we are probably on the back side of it
- To keep workplaces and institutes of higher education open, people should upgrade their masks
 - Medical grade at a minimum
 - All employers must supply upgraded masks (as of Jan. 17, 2022)

OTHER GUIDANCE

- Isolation guidance is still 10 days regardless of vaccination status
- If you test negative on day 5 or later, are free from fever at least 24 hours, and other symptoms are lessening, you can be released from isolation before day 10 but you have to continue to wear an upgraded mask up until day 10
- In workplace: outbreak management teams have been dealing with an enormous amount of outbreaks. Employers are required to report any clusters (3 or more lab- confirmed cases at work site within 14-day period).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Our international students who have received an international vaccine insist on a Moderna booster when the recommendation for these students is the Pfizer booster. How do we proceed?

A. As of now the only vaccine authorized to give international students is Pfizer.

Q. Reinfection: Is it safe to assume that if someone has had COVID in the last month that they are not at risk of reinfection?

A. You can make a fairly good assumption that any infections occurring now are Omicron and unlikely someone will be quickly reinfected with Omicron, partly because they do have some short-term immunity and also because the Omicron variant is 99 percent over.

Q. Level of masks – we have surgical masks that are ASTM level 1. Can you speak to the levels? Should we double up on them or throw them all out?

A. Level 2 or Level 3 are better, but Level 1 masks are OK as long as they have the ASTM rating.