



## COMMUNITY NOTICE

For Immediate Release:

Tsiothóhrha/December 16, 2021

### **DOH UPDATES THE COMMUNITY ON THE COVID-19 OMICRON VARIANT**

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's Department of Health (DOH) is providing the community with more information regarding the Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus. Two cases of the omicron variant had been identified in Ottawa, ON, recently. No other statistics have been provided at this time on the spread of the variant.

Health experts are anticipating the Omicron variant to be spread more easily than the Delta variant of COVID-19, and anyone infected with the Omicron variant can spread the virus to others, even if they are fully vaccinated or don't have symptoms.

Research is still being conducted on how severe illness can become with infection of the Omicron variant. Data is currently being gathered on reinfections and breakthrough infections in fully vaccinated people, and if the Omicron variant causes more severe illness or death than infections with other variants.

Current vaccines are expected to protect against severe illness, hospitalization, and deaths due to infection of the Omicron variant. Breakthrough infections in fully vaccinated people are likely to occur. Like with other variants, the vaccines have remained effective in preventing severe illness, hospitalizations, and death. The emergence of the Omicron variant further raises the importance of getting vaccinated, and receiving boosters when eligible.

Should you or a member of your household be infected with the omicron variant, all household members of the positive person will be asked to self-isolate, regardless of vaccination status. Also, any high-risk contacts to the omicron variant will be asked to isolate regardless of vaccination status.

DOH is reminding community members to follow public health measures when going out in public, such as wearing a mask, frequently sanitizing your hands, and practicing social distancing where possible, especially during the busy holiday season. Stores are busier and seeing more people in and out of public establishments.

If you have questions, would like more information on the Omicron variant, or would like to register to receive your COVID-19 vaccine at one of the upcoming vaccine clinics, please contact the Community Health Program at 613-575-2341.