



Health, Housing &
Community Services Department
Public Health Officer Unit

December 28, 2021

Statement Regarding the Increase of COVID-19 Case Transmission Due to Omicron

The statewide, seven-day average case rate Nov 27th to Dec 24th has increased by 320% (10.1 to 42.4) and hospitalizations have increased by 16.3% since Thanksgiving. In addition, on December 2, 2021, the SARS-CoV-2 B.1.1.529 (“Omicron”) variant was detected in the City of Berkeley and continues to circulate throughout the community. The Omicron variant (now comprises approximately 73% of cases sequenced, nationally, and rapid increases are occurring globally) further emphasizes the importance of vaccination and boosters. This variant is highly transmissible especially in indoor settings and requires multi-component prevention strategies to reduce spread. Despite high vaccination rates, the City of Berkeley is experiencing high levels of community transmission due to the Omicron variant. While the risk for COVID-19 infection is highest among unvaccinated residents and those who have not received a booster, the proportion of post-vaccination infections is increasing. Hospitalizations have also increased among unvaccinated persons.

Pursuant to Paragraph 6 of Appendix A of the August 2, 2021 Health Officer Order for the Wearing of Face Coverings in Indoor Settings (as revised October 27, 2021), the City has determined that, in order to reduce the risk of transmission, the limited exemption for vaccinated people in certain settings is no longer in effect. As such, people in offices, gyms and other fitness facilities, employee commuter vehicles, religious gatherings, and other organized gatherings of individuals who meet regularly must wear face coverings regardless of vaccination status.

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Health Officer

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