

SWC Healthcare Preparedness Advisory Coalition (HPAC) Meeting Notes

January 19, 2022

Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health

Present at Meeting: Crystalynn Kuntz, Kalen Ost

Present Via Lifesize: DelRae Baumgartner, Janel Brousseau, Vicki Butler, Archie Gilliss, Neil Johnson, Terri Kaseman, Tracy Kruger, Christina Kuntz, Scott Osadchuk, Vanessa Raile, Daren Repnow, Mary Senger, Gary Stockert, Mary Ellen Strand, Tammy Theurer, Rochelle Vandervliet, Janessa Vogel, UND Center for Family Medicine, 7018242935.

AGENDA ITEMS

➤ COVID Update/PowerPoint

- The COVID-19 Omicron variant has 10 times more mutations on the spike protein than the Delta variant. The combination of four particular mutations helps Omicron evade antibodies, say scientists. A group of four new mutations may create additional obstacles for certain antibodies. Three mutations near the furin cleavage site may be associated with making the variant more transmissible. There are 15 mutations in the receptor binding domain, the part of the spike that mediates how easily the virus attaches itself to cells.
- COVID cases have exploded due to the Omicron variant. Last week the World Health Organization reported more than 15 million cases of COVID, which led one advisor to say, “In 30 years working on infectious diseases we have not seen an epidemic curve like this before.” The United States is averaging 801,903 cases per day, with a 98 percent increase in the past two weeks. On average, 155,943 people are hospitalized in the U.S. for/with COVID-19, which has increased 61 percent over the past 2 weeks. The U.S. is averaging 1,964 COVID-19 deaths per day.
- Facility Bed Available as of January 17, 2022
 - CHI St. Alexis Medical Center, Bismarck (ICU in Facility)
 - 0 Staffed ICU Beds
 - 0 Available Staffed Inpatient Beds (Excluding ICU)
 - 0 Staffed Pediatrics ICU Beds
 - 0 Available Staffed Pediatrics Inpatient Beds (Excluding ICU)
 - Sanford Health, Bismarck (ICU in Facility)
 - 0 Available Staffed ICU Beds
 - 3 Available Staffed Inpatient Beds (Excluding ICU)
 - 0 Available Staffed Pediatrics ICU Beds
 - 4 Available Staffed Pediatrics Inpatient Beds (Excluding ICU)
- North Dakota’s K-12 schools are being impacted by the increase in COVID cases. As of January 18, there were 1,041 active student cases and 127 active staff cases.
- As of January 8, 2022, Omicron accounted for 98.3 percent of the country’s COVID

cases, while the Delta variant represented 1.7 percent. On January 15, 2022, the North Dakota Department of Health reported that Omicron variant testing resulted in 130 out of 142 (91.5 percent) sequenced specimens confirmed to be Omicron, and estimates that at least 90 percent of the COVID cases circulating in the state are of the Omicron variant.

- Vaccination continues to provide a significant measure of defense for individuals hospitalized in North Dakota. Of the 115 hospitalized on January 11, 2022, 86 were not fully vaccinated. Of the 19 individuals in an ICU, 17 were not fully vaccinated. Of the 68 hospitalizations for children, all but one was not fully vaccinated. Of the 27 pregnant women hospitalized, 25 were not fully vaccinated.
- The North Dakota Department of Health continues to provide data through its COVID-19 Vaccine dashboard. This data is updated by 10 a.m., Monday through Friday. Information is available at <https://www.health.nd.gov/covid19vaccine/dashboard>.
- COVID-19 vaccination continues to be the most effective way to prevent severe infection, including hospitalization and death, due to the omicron variant. Everyone age five and older are recommended to be vaccinated. Individuals over age 12, who have completed their primary series more than five months ago for Pfizer or Moderna, or two months ago for Johnson and Johnson, should receive a booster dose. Being up to date with vaccinations, including booster doses, remains the single best way to prevent serious illness, hospitalization and death due to COVID-19.
- A new COVID vaccine (Novavax) is being developed. Like other COVID-19 vaccines, Novavax does not cause COVID-19 infection. Novavax achieved 90.4 percent efficacy in the U.S. and Mexico Phase 3 trials, and an 89.7 percent efficacy in a UK trial. However, these trials were conducted prior to the detection of the Omicron variant. More data is needed to understand efficacy against Omicron.
- The supply of antivirals and monoclonal antibodies is extremely limited in North Dakota, as well as nationally. This week the state health department received 72 doses of sotrovimab, the one monoclonal antibody treatment which works well against the Omicron variant.
- With home COVID testing becoming more popular, it is important to note that testing following exposure differs between community and healthcare guidance. In healthcare, regardless of vaccination status, testing is recommended following exposure. Two tests are recommended: 1. Immediately, but not sooner than 24 hours after exposure and 2. If negative, again at 5-7 days. You can place an order for 4 free at-home COVID-19 tests at <https://special.usps.com/testkits>.
- If someone not working in a healthcare setting tests at home, test results are not required to be reported to the North Dakota Department of Health. People who test at home and are ill should contact their health care provider if they have concerns about their health or their results. People who test positive on a home test should

self-isolate following CDC guidance. People who test positive are encouraged to notify close contacts. For more information, call the state health department's COVID-19 Hotline at (866) 207-2880.

- Source control options for healthcare providers:
 - A NIOSH-approved N95 or equivalent or higher-level respirator OR
 - A respirator approved under standards used in other countries that are similar to NIOSH-approved N95 filtering facepiece respirators (Note: these should not be used instead of NIOSH-approved respirator when respiratory protection is indicated) OR
 - A well-fitting facemask.
- Source control and physical distancing are recommended for everyone in a health care setting. This is particularly important for individuals regardless of their vaccination status, who live or work in counties with substantial to high community transmission or who have:
 - Not been full vaccinated.
 - Suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection or other respiratory infection (e.g., those with runny nose, cough, sneeze); or
 - Had close contact (patients/visitors) or a higher-risk exposure (HCP) with someone with SARS-CoV-2 infection for 14 days after their exposure, including those residing or working in areas of a healthcare facility experiencing SARS-CoV-2 transmission (i.e., outbreak) or
 - Moderate to severe immunocompromise; or
 - Otherwise had source control and physical distancing recommended by public health authorities
- Masking is a critical public health tool for preventing the spread of COVID-19. CDC's [mask recommendations](#) provide information that people can use to improve how well their masks protect them. Learn how to improve how well your mask protects you by visiting CDC's [Improve How Your Mask Protects You page](#).
- When choosing a respirator, look at how well it fits and read the manufacturer instructions. These instructions should include information on how to wear, store, and clean or properly dispose of the respirator. Respirators have markings printed on the product to indicate they are authentic, see appropriate [N95 markings image icon](#) and [KN95 markings](#). It is important to determine if your respirator fits properly. NIOSH and OSHA have developed a [video](#) and [fact sheet](#) demonstrating how to determine if the respirator fits properly (user seal check) and how to properly put on and take off a respirator.

➤ Influenza

- 1,131 new influenza cases were reported this week, bringing the total season cases to 6,638 so far. Presently an estimated 13.55 percent of students are absent from school due to influenza. 133 hospitalizations have been attributed to influenza, along

with 8 deaths this season. Influenza A appears to be the primary subtype.

➤ **Roundtable**

- The North Dakota Department of Health is offering an Emergency Recruitment Program to encourage individuals to pursue careers working in skilled nursing, basic care and assisted living facilities as a Temporary Nurse Aide and Certified Nurse Aide. There will be up to 100 temporary nurse aides and certified nurse aides that will receive a \$2,000 sign-on payment after completion of six months of eligible employment. For more information, contact the Recruitment Program at (701) 328-0731 or via email at nddohdoc@nd.gov, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- The North Dakota Long Term Care Association will be hosting its spring convention in May. Included in this convention will be an evacuation training, table top, and an all-day convention for emergency preparedness. More details about the convention will be coming.
- Crystalynn and Kalen are available to help fit test staff at Long Term Care facilities. The fit testing equipment (hoods, nebulizer, Bitrex) can also be borrowed by facilities that would like to conduct their own fit testing for N95 masks. A variety of forms are located at the bottom of the BBPH Fit Testing page: <https://www.bismarcknd.gov/1883/Fit-Testing>. Contact Crystalynn (ckuntz@bismarcknd.gov) or Kalen (kost@bismarcknd.gov) for more information.
- Upcoming Training from NDSU Center for Immunization Research and Education (CIRE). Long Haul COVID-19: The Next Looming Pandemic by Paul Carson, MD. January 21, 2022, Noon to 1:30 p.m. For more information visit <https://ndsu.zoom.us/j/93792505042>.

➤ **Potential Next Meeting:**

- March 16, 2022, 9 a.m., via Lifesize. Meeting is not yet finalized and more information will be provided as the date gets closer.

Respectfully submitted,

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Emergency Preparedness Information Specialist