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IMPORTANT NOTICE

The COVID-19 pandemic has been quite challenging for everyone and although COVID-19 vaccines are becoming available, the Zuni community must remain vigilant.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) have confirmed that a new variant of COVID-19 is now in the United States, which is reported to be more contagious. As of January 25, 2021, CDC reports two (2) known cases in New Mexico. We urge our Zuni community members to double up on their face masks, and continue to social distance – 6 feet apart and wash/sanitize hands frequently. We ask you to stay home as much as possible and stay away from hot spots.

From CDC:

Multiple COVID-19 variants are circulating globally.

These variants seem to spread more easily and quickly than other variants, which may lead to more cases of COVID-19. Currently, there is no evidence that these variants cause more severe illness or increased risk of death. However, an increase in the number of cases will put more strain on health care resources, lead to more hospitalizations, and potentially more deaths. Rigorous and increased compliance with public health mitigation strategies, such as vaccination, physical distancing, use of masks, hand hygiene, and isolation and quarantine, will be essential to limiting the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and protecting public health.

What we do not know

Scientists are working to learn more about these variants, and more studies are needed to understand:

- *How widely these new variants have spread*

- *How the disease caused by these new variants differs from the disease caused by other variants that are currently circulating*
- *How these variants affect existing therapies and vaccines*

What it means

Public health officials are studying these variants quickly to learn more to control their spread. They want to understand whether the variants:

- *Spread more easily from person to person*
- *Cause milder or more severe disease in people*
- *Are detected by currently available viral tests*
- *Respond to medicines currently being used to treat people for COVID-19*

Change the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines.

What CDC is doing

CDC, in collaboration with other public health agencies, is monitoring the situation closely. CDC is working to detect and characterize emerging viral variants and expand its ability to look for COVID-19 and new variants. Furthermore, CDC has staff available on-the-ground support to investigate the characteristics of viral variants. CDC is collaborating with EPA to confirm that disinfectants on EPA's [List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)^{external icon} inactivate these variant viruses. As new information becomes available, CDC will provide updates.

Resource:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2021. COVID-19 And Your Health. [online] Available at: <<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant.html>> [Accessed 26 January 2021].