



## Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

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### News Release

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### Immediate Release

## ***COVID-19 Omicron Variant Identified in the Dickinson-Iron District as Cases Surge***

Dickinson County, MI- January 18, 2022- The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) notified the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department (DIDHD) that the MDHHS Bureau of Laboratories identified the COVID-19 Omicron variant within our district.

“It is important to know that not all COVID tests are sequenced. With the rapid rise in case counts over the last few days, we are certain that there are several additional cases in our community,” said Ruth Manier, Director of Community Health Services. “We encourage residents to take precautions to protect themselves, their families, and their community. Staying home if you are not feeling well, masking in public or crowded spaces, following quarantine guidelines, and staying up-to-date on all COVID-19 vaccinations are helpful strategies in preventing and slowing the spread of COVID-19. Vaccinations continue to be our best defense to reduce the severity of symptoms, prevent hospitalizations, and death. This variant appears to be extremely contagious, which has led to a rapid surge in cases.”

The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department has experienced a rapid increase in reported cases of COVID-19 since the beginning of January. As of January 18, 2022, Dickinson County has had 949 reported cases of COVID-19 in the month of January. Dickinson County has an average of 56 cases being reported each day. Iron County

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has had 244 cases reported in the month of January and had averaged 14 cases being reported each day. For comparison purposes, Dickinson County's highest monthly case count to date was November of 2020 when 973 cases were reported. Iron County's highest monthly case count was 272 in October 2020 and November 2021. Manier states, "we are expecting to break our own records with case counts in each county before the end of the week. We know that there is also a delay in reporting of rapid antigen tests being conducted in the community." Case counts do not include the numerous positive home tests taken by residents.

With the high transmission rate of the Omicron variant, vaccination is more important than ever. Primary vaccinations are currently open to anyone 5 and older. Boosters are available to those 12 and older. Vaccinations can be scheduled with local providers by calling your local health department office, your physician's office, or pharmacies. Please reach out to these credible sources if you are having questions and concerns about the COVID-19 vaccines.

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