

Pickaway County Public Health

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Press Release

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Date: 01/28/2022

For Immediate Release

Updates to COVID-19 case investigation and contact tracing

The rapid spread of the Omicron variant has significantly changed the way COVID-19 is affecting our community. Many more people are getting sick, which has severely impacted hospital capacity, but their symptoms are often less severe and don't last as long. This recently caused the CDC to shorten recommended isolation and quarantine timeframes. Considering these changes, universal contact tracing, case investigation and exposure notification are no longer practical approaches to controlling the spread of COVID-19, especially when transmission rates are so high.

In alignment with recommendations from the Ohio Department of Health, PCPH has shifted to an outbreak-based model of COVID-19 case management. The health department will continue to monitor COVID-19 case reports and develop tools to identify clusters of cases that have a common source of exposure. When outbreaks are identified, the department will work directly with partners to advise on steps for mitigating the outbreak and protecting the public from further exposure.

These changes will also be implemented in K-12 schools which have been conducting their own COVID-19 case investigation and contact tracing since the 20-21 school year. While schools will no longer be required to conduct contact tracing and exposure notification for each student or staff member who has tested positive for COVID-19, they will continue to report weekly case totals and work closely with the health department when outbreaks in their facilities are identified. Schools should continue to follow the "[Mask to Stay, Test to Play](#)," guidelines which allow exposed students and staff to remain in the classroom and should continue to keep parents and community members informed of the COVID-19 status in their districts.

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Pickaway County Health Commissioner Adam Negley, MPH says “We are still seeing very high community spread of COVID-19 and unfortunately, we can’t let our guard down yet. This change will allow us to focus on targeted approaches to control COVID-19 where it is causing the most problems and better support our partners in the community to keep residents safe. What has not changed is the need for individuals to act when they test positive or know they have been around someone who is positive. Stay away from others for at least 5 days and wear a mask for an additional 5 days. Finally, I continue to urge all eligible Pickaway County residents get vaccinated and boosted and wear a mask when outside the home, especially indoors and anywhere physical distancing is not possible.”

If you should have questions or concerns, please contact Pickaway County Public Health at 740-477-9667. We are open Monday - Friday 8:00am to 4:30pm.

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