News Release

Unified Government of Wyandotte County
701 N. 7th Street, Room 620
Kansas City, Kansas 66101

More Than Twenty COVID-19 Delta Variant Cases Now Confirmed in Wyandotte County, Including One Death

Twenty-two Delta cases confirmed; other COVID-19 spread in the County

Delta variant in Wyandotte County

As of July 1, 2021, twenty-two cases of the Delta variant of COVID-19 have been identified among Wyandotte County residents. Among these Delta cases, one person has died due to COVID-19. The majority of the Delta cases in Wyandotte County are among younger residents, with fourteen cases, or 64%, among people under age 30.

UGPHD officials say that the confirmed Delta cases so far do not appear to be linked to one another, indicating possible community-wide spread of this strain of the virus. The Delta variant is of particular concern to healthcare and public health professionals because it spreads much more easily than other variants or the original virus that causes COVID-19. Additional variants have also been identified in Wyandotte County, including thirty-two confirmed cases of the Alpha, or UK variant.

The majority of Wyandotte County residents have not received a COVID-19 vaccine, and vaccination rates are still behind many other counties in Kansas and the region. According to state and local public health experts, communities with low vaccination rates are at especially high risk with the presence of the Delta variant because of how easily it spreads.

The Unified Government Public Health Department (UGPHD) recently collaborated with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KHDE) to increase genomic sequencing on positive COVID-19 tests in Wyandotte County to check for COVID-19 variants, in partnership with local labs. Additionally, some labs in the area are starting to do sequencing in-house.

Outbreak at the Wyandotte County Jail; Other Outbreaks Under Investigation

The Wyandotte County Sheriff's Office has reported positive COVID tests among 12 inmates and two staff at the detention center. The Sheriff's Office has continued with testing of both inmates and employees to monitor the outbreak.

Samples from the positive cases has been sent to the KDHE lab for genetic sequencing to determine if this outbreak includes any COVID variants, such as Delta. The results are anticipated later this week. In the meantime, the Sheriff's Office is continuing its regimen of thorough cleaning, offering vaccinations to staff and inmates, testing, and quarantining individuals with potential exposure to contain the outbreak.

The UGPHD has also identified two small outbreaks associated with youth summer programs in Wyandotte County. Contact tracers are still gathering more information on these outbreaks, and the UGPHD will provide guidance to people involved on how to prevent further spread of the virus.

Ways to reduce COVID-19 risk

Vaccinations
The most effective way to protect against getting COVID-19 and spreading the virus to others is to get vaccinated. People age 12 and older can get vaccinated free of charge, regardless of whether they have health insurance.

Free vaccines are offered by the UGPHD. Find the latest vaccination hours and other resources at WycoVaccines.org.

Pharmacies, clinics, and other providers offer COVID-19 vaccines as well. Find additional vaccination sites near you at Vaccines.gov.

Testing
COVID-19 testing is still crucial for monitoring and reducing the spread of COVID-19. Here are the current public health recommendations on testing:
- If you are not fully vaccinated, you should get tested…
    o If you have any symptoms.
    o If you have been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19.
    o If you have been in activities that put you at higher risk for COVID-19, such as attending large gatherings, or being in crowded or poorly-ventilated indoor settings.
    o If you are getting ready to travel or have just returned from travel.
    o People may also choose to periodically get tested as an extra precaution, even if none of the above criteria apply.

- If you are fully vaccinated:
    o You should still get tested if you have any symptoms. COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective at preventing COVID-19, but no vaccine is 100% effective.
        ▪ If you do get COVID-19 after being vaccinated, the vaccine helps prevent you from having a serious case of COVID-19.
    o According to the CDC, people who are fully vaccinated do not need to get tested if exposed to COVID-19 – they only need to be tested if they have COVID-19 symptoms.

Free COVID-19 saliva testing is available Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the UGPHD facility located in the former Kmart location at 7836 State Avenue. People in Wyandotte County can also request to have a free test delivered to their doorstep by calling 3-1-1 or going to WycoHelp.org.

Masks
Masks are still strongly recommended for anyone who is not fully vaccinated, especially in indoor public spaces, or in outdoor spaces where social distancing is not possible. COVID-19 is primarily spread through respiratory droplets when people breathe, talk, shout, sing, cough, sneeze, etc. Masks help reduce the spread of these droplets.

People who are fully vaccinated are at lower risk than those who are not vaccinated, but may still choose to wear a mask as a precaution, or may still be required to wear a mask in certain settings, such as their place of work or at any local businesses that require masks.

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Community Information and Questions:

> Vaccine information: Go to WycoVaccines.org or call 3-1-1 (913-573-5311)
> Other COVID-19 updates: Go to wycokck.org/COVID-19

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