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Distributed by the NH Health Alert Network
DHHS.Health.Alert@dhhs.nh.gov
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NH-HAN 20220111



COVID-19 Pandemic, Update # 54 *Omicron Variant, Therapeutics, and COVID-19 Vaccine Updates*

Key Points and Recommendations:

- New Hampshire is experiencing a [rapid increase in COVID-19](#) and in the proportion of SARS-CoV-2 infections due to the Omicron variant. Based on Taqpath PCR testing performed at the NH Public Health Laboratories (PHL) last week, the estimated proportion of positive specimens showing S-Gene Target Failure (SGTF, indicative of the Omicron variant) increased from 30-40% to 75%. Yesterday, over 90% of positive specimens showed SGTF.
- Given the rapid increase in Omicron, the NH Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) recommends that providers transition to utilize Paxlovid (PO), sotrovimab (IV), remdesivir (IV), and molnupiravir (PO) for treatment of non-hospitalized patients with mild-moderate COVID-19 who are at high risk for progression to severe disease (medications listed in order of preference). Molnupiravir should only be used when other treatment options are not available (see NIH treatment guidelines). NH DPHS recommends against the use of the monoclonal antibody therapies bamlanivimab/etesevimab and casirivimab/imdevimab, both of which are not expected to be active against Omicron.
- Review [NIH Treatment Guideline](#) updates, including:
 - [Utilizing COVID-19 treatments for high-risk, non-hospitalized patients with mild to moderate COVID-19 when Omicron is predominant](#)
 - [Patient prioritization for outpatient therapies](#)
- Also review the recent CDC HAN [Using Therapeutics to Prevent and Treat COVID-19](#) and NH [HAN Update #52](#).
 - Providers prescribing [Paxlovid](#) MUST review a patient's medication list to assess for [Paxlovid Drug-Drug Interactions](#).
 - Providers prescribing [molnupiravir](#) MUST:
 - Assess pregnancy status (e.g., perform a pregnancy test) when used in women of child bearing potential
 - Counsel lactating mothers to avoid breastfeeding during treatment and for 4 days after the final dose (pumping and discarding breast milk is recommended)
 - Counsel sexually active males and females about correctly and consistently using a reliable method of contraception as previously described in NH [HAN Update #52](#) and in guidance linked above
- CDC is hosting a clinician webinar tomorrow (Wednesday, January 12th) from 2:00–3:00 pm titled “*What Clinicians Need to Know About the New Oral Antiviral Medications for COVID-19*”, which can be accessed online: https://emergency.cdc.gov/coca/calls/2022/callinfo_011222.asp.
- See NH's [COVID-19 Treatment Resources](#) website for routine updates on distribution of therapeutics.

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- Note also important updates to CDC's [Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines](#):
 - Booster doses are now recommended for everybody **12 years of age or older** who has completed a COVID-19 primary vaccine series.
 - Age-eligible persons who completed a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine primary series are recommended to receive a booster dose starting at least **5 months** after completion of their primary series (including any additional 3rd primary series doses administered because a person is moderately or severely immunocompromised).
 - Additional 3rd primary series dose vaccination for people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised is now recommended for persons **5 years of age or older**.
 - Updates to CDC's [Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines](#) have been frequent. Providers and healthcare organizations should routinely monitor CDC's website for updated COVID-19 vaccination guidance and implement recommendations; NH DPHS will NOT routinely send a Health Alert Network (HAN) message for all updates.
 - NH DPHS conducts **Healthcare Provider and Public Health Partner** webinars the **2nd and 4th Thursday** of each month from 12:00 – 1:00 pm (next call will occur on Thursday, January 13th):
 - Zoom link: <https://nh-dhhs.zoom.us/j/94059287404>
 - Call-in phone number: (646) 558-8656
 - Meeting ID: 940 5928 7404
 - Password: 353809
 - NH DPHS conducts **School and Childcare Partner** webinars the **1st and 3rd Wednesday** of each month from 3:30 – 4:30 pm (next call will occur on Wednesday 1/19):
 - Zoom link: <https://nh-dhhs.zoom.us/j/98062195081>
 - Webinar ID: 980 6219 5081
 - Telephone: 646-558-8656
 - Passcode: 197445

- For any questions regarding this notification, please call the NH DHHS, DPHS, Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at (603) 271-4496 during business hours (8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.).
- If you are calling after hours or on the weekend, please call the New Hampshire Hospital switchboard at (603) 271-5300 and request the Public Health Professional on-call.
- To change your contact information in the NH Health Alert Network, please send an email to DHHS.Health.Alert@dhhs.nh.gov.

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From: Benjamin P. Chan, MD, MPH; State Epidemiologist
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