



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Department of Health Confirms First Case with the COVID-19 Variant

Harrisburg, PA – Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine today announced the first confirmed case of the COVID-19 variant, SARS-CoV-2 B.1.1.7, in Pennsylvania. The confirmed case is in Dauphin County. This variant is the same one that was first discovered in England in December.

This individual tested positive after known international exposure. A case investigation and contact tracing were performed to identify, inform and monitor anyone who was in close contact with this individual. The individual had mild symptoms, which have since been resolved while they completed their isolation at home.

“Pennsylvania has been preparing for this variant by working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and has been sending 10-35 random samples biweekly to the CDC since November to study sequencing and detect any potential cases for this new COVID-19 variant,” Dr. Levine said. “Public health experts are in the early stages of working to better understand this new variant, how it spreads and how it affects people who are infected with it.

“There is still much to learn about this new variant, so we need to remain vigilant and continue to urge Pennsylvanians to stop the spread by washing their hands, practicing social distancing, avoiding gatherings, downloading COVID Alert PA and answering the call. Stay calm, stay alert and stay safe.”

The COVID-19 virus, also known as SARS-CoV-2, mutates regularly as virus mutation is common. According to the [CDC](#), this new variant was recognized in the United Kingdom in mid-December 2020. As public health experts continue to study this new variant, they expect that all currently available diagnostic tests will detect the variant as COVID-19 and that the COVID-19 vaccines with federal Emergency Use Authorizations will remain effective against this variant as well.

The Wolf Administration stresses the role Pennsylvanians play in helping to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, not your hands.
- Clean surfaces frequently.
- Stay home to avoid spreading COVID-19, especially if you are unwell.
- If you must go out, you are required to wear a mask when in a business or where it is difficult to maintain proper social distancing.
- Download the COVID Alert PA app and make your phone part of the fight. The free app can be found in the [Google Play Store](#) and the [Apple App Store](#) by searching for “covid alert pa”.

Updated Coronavirus Links: Press Releases, State Lab Photos, Graphics

- [Daily COVID-19 Report](#)
- [Press releases regarding coronavirus](#)
- [Latest information on the coronavirus](#)
- [Photos of the state's lab in Exton](#) (for download and use)
- [Coronavirus and preparedness graphics](#) (located at the bottom of the page)
- [Community preparedness and procedures materials](#)

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