

For Immediate Release

March 1, 2021

Additional UK variant cases identified in Sedgwick County

TOPEKA – Eight new cases of the United Kingdom, or UK, variant known as B.1.1.7, have been identified in Sedgwick County. These cases were identified in individuals all living in the same household and do not appear to be connected to earlier cases in Kansas. A case investigation is being conducted and close contacts notified. Further details concerning the patients, including demographics, will not be released.

The total of UK identified variants in Kansas is now at 10. The first case was identified in February in Ellis County, followed by a second case in Sedgwick County. The initial two cases are believed to have been exposed through separate, out-of-state travel.

The variant was determined through the whole genome sequencing (WGS) conducted through the laboratories at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE).

“We continue to encourage people to take the appropriate precautions. This includes wearing a mask that fits snugly around the nose and face and has multiple layers of fabric or layering thinner masks with an additional cloth face mask to improve the fit,” Dr. Norman, KDHE Secretary, said. “Kansans should also follow isolation and quarantine recommendations, practice physical distancing, good hygiene, staying home if ill and getting the vaccine if you are able to, once the supply is sufficient.”

“In addition to following these healthy behaviors, this finding also shows the importance of getting tested for COVID-19,” Adrienne Byrne, Sedgwick County Health Director, adds.

Testing is available and free for all Kansans. To find a location near you, visit:

www.gogettested.com/kansas This variant was first reported in the U.S. at the end of December 2020.

Evidence from the UK indicates that this variant spreads much more quickly through the population and, given that fact, may rapidly increase the number of hospitalizations and deaths. More studies are needed to confirm this finding.

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