



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Northern Illinois Rockford Region Public Information Officers
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This is a joint news release issued by the Northern Illinois Rockford Region Public Information Officers (NIR-PIO). NIR-PIO serves Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside, and Winnebago Counties.

FOLLOWING SOCIAL MITIGATIONS TO PREVENT SPREAD OF COVID-19 CONTINUES TO BE IMPORTANT AS VARIANT FOUND IN REGION 1

Northern Illinois Rockford Region –The first case of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) variant B.1.1.7 has been identified in the Northern Illinois Rockford Region, Region 1. The case is a resident of Lee County with unknown travel history as the disease investigation is ongoing. The B.1.1.7 variant was first identified in the United Kingdom and has already been reported in other regions in Illinois including Chicago, Cook County, and Lake County.

According to Cathy Ferguson-Allen, Administrator of the Lee County Health Department, “the identification of this variant in the region was anticipated as the variant is known to spread more easily and had already been identified in Illinois in nearby regions. This case is a reminder that the community must be vigilant in practicing prevention measures to protect themselves and each other from COVID-19. It also highlights the importance of following quarantine recommendations and to get tested if you’ve been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.”

Protect Yourself, Your Family, and Your Community:

- WASH-UP: Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds frequently.
- MASK-UP: Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover or mask.
- BACK-UP: Keep at least 6 feet apart from others.
- VAX-UP: When it is your turn, get vaccinated for COVID-19.

Early indications are that the vaccine offers protection against the B.1.1.7 variant, however, information is preliminary and evolving. Local Health Departments (LHDs) in the Northern Illinois Rockford Region (NIR-HDs) are working hard to get the community vaccinated with the resources that are available. The vaccine supply continues to be limited.

While those in phase 1b, which includes frontline essential workers and those 65 and older, are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine, there is not enough vaccine available to vaccinate everyone that is eligible. Those in Phase 1b should know the following about vaccinations:

- Check your local health department’s website or social media page for instructions on how vaccines are being distributed in your county.
- While you may be eligible to get the vaccine, Phase 1b includes a large group of individuals, so it may take a while for your turn, but we will get to you.
- Your patience allows the NIR-HDs to focus limited resources on administering vaccinations.

For more information:

Go to IDPH and State of Illinois websites on COVID-19 here:

- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19>
- <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/>

For general questions about COVID-19, call the IDPH hotline at 1-800-889-3931

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