

## COVID-19 Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) for Variants of Concern (VOC) December 2, 2021

The World Health Organization (WHO) and U.S. government has classified a new variant, B.1.1.529 (Omicron), as a VOC. Omicron, first identified in Botswana and South Africa, is now in many other countries, including the United States, Hong Kong, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and several European countries.

### Actions Requested of All Health Care Providers:

- **Ask** patients about recent international travel or exposure to persons with recent international travel, especially to countries where the Omicron variant has been detected.
- **Report** suspected case to Sacramento County Public Health (SCPH) **immediately** by phone at (916) 875-5881 for guidance and coordination of testing and/or WGS.

SCPHL has the capacity to perform WGS and will perform WGS for the following cases:

- ICU patients and deaths
- Samples with epidemiologic significance
- Outbreaks
- Re-infections
- Vaccine breakthrough (infection >14 days after completion of vaccine series)

For WGS at SCPHL, please do the following:

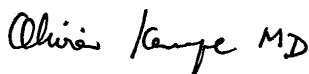
- Complete the [test requisition form](#)
- In the **SPECIAL REQUESTS** section (bottom right) indicate:
  - Request for WGS
  - Reason for WGS (travel-related, ICU, death, re-infection, vaccine breakthrough)
  - CT value, if available
  - Lab does not need to be notified if this information is provided
- Send specimens to SCPHL (address on test requisition form) within 3 days of collection. Refer to the [specimen collection guidance](#) for more information.

Note: Results will not be reported to the health care provider or patient as they are for surveillance purposes only.

### Resources:

1. CDC Health Advisory: [New SARS-CoV-2 Variant of Concern Identified: Omicron \(B.1.1.529\) Variant](#)
2. Omicron Variant Fact Sheet (CDPH): <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Omicron-Variant-Fact-Sheet.aspx>
3. 2019 Novel Coronavirus Specimen Collection and Laboratory Guidance (SCPHL): <https://dhs.saccounty.net/PUB/Laboratory/Documents/Resources/GD-COVID19LaboratoryTestGuidance20200311.pdf>
4. Test Requisition Form (SCPHL): <https://dhs.saccounty.net/PUB/Laboratory/Documents/Resources/FM-TestRequisitionForm2021.pdf>

Sincerely,



Olivia Kasirye, MD, MS  
Public Health Officer