State of the COVID-19 Pandemic

1/11/22

COVID-19 Data: Year In Review

• The summer of 2021 saw some of the lowest COVID-19 case and death counts of the pandemic.

• As the delta variant became the predominant strain, 42,000 cases were diagnosed in August 2021—10 times the number detected in June.

• The delta-fueled wave peaked in November 2021 at 123,000 cases, below the peak of 180,000 infections in November 2020, and resulting in
  o 5,500 Minnesotans admitted to hospitals with COVID-19 complications,
  o a significant strain on hospital bed capacity which remains limited.
COVID-19 Data: Year In Review, cont.

- Even with increasing cases
  - COVID-19 deaths decreased by 22% in 2021 compared to 2020.
- Between 2020 & 2021, over a 10-year drop in the average age of death due to COVID-19
- Reflecting the high rates of vaccination among those 65 years and older.

COVID Mitigation Guidance

MDH recommends wearing a well-fitted, high-quality mask

- Masks protect others by limiting droplets expelled by an infected person and may provide some protection for the wearer
- High-quality masks provide better protection for the wearer

MDH guidance on other mitigation strategies:

- Get Vaccinated
- Get Boosted
- Stay Home if sick or if you test positive
- Practice social distancing
- Get Tested
United States Daily Cases

New reported cases

- All time
- Last 90 days

600,000 cases
400,000
200,000
Feb. 2020
Jun.
Oct.
Feb. 2021
Jun.
Oct.

12/1/2021

Omicron: What do we know?

- New variant found in association with an increase in cases in South Africa in mid-November (lineage B.1.1.529)

- Multiple mutations across the SARS-CoV-2 genome, with >30 mutations in the spike protein

- Lineage distinct from other variants

12/1/2021
Omicron: What we know- EARLY evidence

• Highly infectious and moves quickly
  • Doubling every 1.5-3.0 days

• Seeing some evidence of reduced proportion of severe disease, milder disease in persons immunized by vaccination or prior infection.

• Significantly lower efficacy of Monoclonal Antibody Therapy. One therapy (Sotrovimab) is effective but very low supplies nationally.

12/1/2021

Omicron: What we know- EARLY evidence

• Partial vaccine escape
  • Large number of vaccine breakthrough infections and reinfections
  • Booster increases immune response, but not at same level as Delta
  • Still thought to have some protection against severe disease

12/1/2021
Omicron new cases in the UK thru 12/28 (blue) and new cases among fully vaccinated (red) thru 12/28

Omicron and Vaccine
Impact of Vaccination in Minnesota

- In the absence of vaccination program, a recent study showed there would have been ~1.1 million additional COVID-19 deaths and more than 10.3 million additional COVID-19 hospitalizations in the U.S. by November 2021.
- Deaths would have been 3.2 times higher and hospitalizations would have been 4.9 times higher without vaccination.
- Applied to Minnesota data, approximately 10,000 deaths and 125,000 hospitalizations from COVID-19 avoided due to vaccinations.
Impact of Vaccination in Minnesota

- As of November 21, 2021
  - Rate of cases is 3 times higher among not fully vaccinated than among fully vaccinated
  - Rate of hospitalizations is 12 times higher among not fully vaccinated than among fully vaccinated
  - Rate of deaths is 13 times higher among not fully vaccinated than among fully vaccinated

Vaccine protection for Original Virus and Omicron Variant

- People with two shots vs. People with two shots and booster
- Antibody levels: Original virus vs. Omicron
- 25 times more protection
Minnesota Experience

Minnesota Cases

- Daily case rates increased by 82% this past week
- Statewide positivity 16.6%
Time to Get to 100,000 COVID-19 Case Increments, MN

Time to Get to 2000 Deaths from COVID-19, MN

Source: MN COVID-19 Case Data. Data current as of 1/13/2022. Data includes all counties. Includes both confirmed and probable cases. For this illustration, we are showing the day the cases reached the next 100,000 cases. For example, for the 100,000+ cases reached on 11/7/2020, we are showing the day the cases reached the next 100,000 cases on 11/7/2020.
Omicron in Minnesota

- >90% of cases likely attributable to Omicron.
- We won’t have complete case counts due to OTC testing.
- Anticipate increase in hospitalizations to follow in several weeks.

Specific Concerns

- Healthcare capacity (both acute and long-term care) already stretched and very likely to worsen
  - Omicron wave will result in some severe disease, even if proportion is less than Delta
  - Influenza cases rising, population significantly under-vaccinated
  - Illness among HCW and families, childcare closures, will further exacerbate already strained staffing
Omicron Mitigation Guidance

MDH recommends wearing a well-fitted, high-quality mask
  - Masks protect the community by limiting droplets expelled by an infected person
  - High-quality masks may protect the wearer but filtering out droplets (possibly aerosols)

MDH guidance on other mitigation strategies remains unchanged:
  - Get Vaccinated
  - Get Boosted
  - Stay Home if sick or if you test positive
  - Practice social distancing
  - Get Tested

Isolation/Quarantine
Updated Isolation Guidelines

Isolation guidelines do not differ for people who are up to date or not up to date with COVID-19 vaccination

• If feeling sick or have COVID-19 symptoms: stay home and away from others, get tested, and wear a well-fitting mask even at home

• If test positive for COVID-19:
  • Stay home and away from others for at least 5 days after symptoms started or test date (asymptomatic), day 0 is symptom onset/test date
  • Wear a well-fitting mask even at home if need to be around others
  • If after 5 days, no fever for at least 24 hours and feel better OR did not develop symptoms: can leave home wearing a well-fitting mask
    • If symptoms develop any time within 10 days, start isolation from symptom onset date
  • If not feeling better/still have fever after 5 days: continue to stay home until no fever for 24 hours and feel better

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Updated Isolation Guidelines, cont.

After stay at home period ends, continue the following for 5 days:

• Wear a well-fitting mask, even at home
• Do not be around others at risk for severe disease (e.g., older adults, people in LTC facilities, people with chronic conditions)
• Do not go to places where you need to take off your mask (e.g., gyms, restaurants) and avoid eating near others at home and work
• Avoid travel for the full 10 days

People unable to wear a well-fitting mask (e.g., < 2 yo, people with certain disabilities)

• Stay home for full 10 days

People with a weakened immune system or severely ill (e.g., ICU admission)

• Stay home for at least 10 days, consult with healthcare provider
• Wear a well-fitting mask around others

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Updated Quarantine Guidelines

If 5 years or older and up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccinations OR have had COVID-19 in the past 3 months:

- Do not need to stay at home
- Wear well-fitting mask around others, even at home for 10 days after exposure to someone with COVID-19 (date of last contact is day 0)
- Get tested at least 5 days after exposure
- Watch for symptoms for 10 days after exposure
- If symptoms develop, isolate immediately and test for COVID-19 (even if up-to-date with vaccinations or positive in last 3 months)

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Updated Quarantine Guidelines, cont.

If not vaccinated or not up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccinations:

- Stay home for at least 5 days after last exposure (day 0 is last day of contact, day 1 is the day after last day of contact)
- Watch for symptoms for 10 days after exposure
- If symptoms develop, isolate immediately and test for COVID-19
- Stay in a separate room from others in your home if possible
- Avoid public transportation, ride-sharing and taxis
- Wear well-fitting mask around others, even at home for 10 days after exposure to someone with COVID-19 (date of last contact is day 0)
- Get tested at least 5 days after exposure
- Avoid individuals and settings with people who are at high risk for severe disease, avoid travel, avoid places where you need to remove your mask (e.g., gym, restaurants)

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Resources

- Stay Up to date with Your Vaccines (CDC)
  www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html
- Isolation/Quarantine Guidelines
- MDH Isolation/Quarantine Guidelines
  Isolation: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html
  Quarantine: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/close.html
- CDC COVID Data Tracker
  https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home
- MDH Situational Update
  www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/situation.html
- Considerations for Food Pantries and Food Distribution Sites: archived, information not updated but still good (less emphasis on cleaning/disinfection at this time)
- MDH: 651-201-5414, for questions/technical assistance

1/5/2022

Thank you!