NEWS RELEASES

# United Kingdom COVID-19 variant identified in Alabama residents

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A new and more highly transmissible COVID-19 variant, B.1.1.7, has been identified in three Alabama residents. Two are from Montgomery County and one is from Jefferson County; two are children under 19 and one is an adult. These are the first reported cases in Alabama of the variant which was first detected in the United Kingdom in late 2020. The UAB Laboratory sequenced the specimens and identified them as the SARS-CoV-2 variant B.1.1.7.

This variant is associated with increased person-to-person transmission of COVID-19. ADPH is closely monitoring the emergence of this variant which has been detected in at least 24 other states, including Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, and North Carolina and at least 293 cases in the U.S.

Viruses mutate, and due to surveillance, it was expected that cases would be found in Alabama. At this time, many infectious disease experts and the CDC have indicated that the current vaccine should be effective against the U.K. strain. However, this is still being studied. Currently, the U.K. variant has not definitively been linked to worse outcomes of the disease. As this variant is recent to the United States, it is important to follow the outcome of persons infected with this variant.

ADPH advises people to continue practicing the usual mitigation standards with emphasis on correct and consistent use of a two- to three-layered face mask of washable, breathable fabric such as cotton. Other prevention methods include practicing social distancing, and washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

For general information about COVID-19, including locations where testing is available, call the COVID-19 Information Hotline number at 1-800-270-7268. Alabama's toll-free COVID-19 Vaccine Scheduling Hotline number is 1-855-566-5333.

*County health departments throughout Alabama provide a wide range of confidential and professional services. Contact your local county health department for additional information.*

*Mission: To promote, protect, and improve Alabama's health*

*Vision: Healthy People. Healthy Communities. Healthy Alabama.*

(https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/index.html)

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