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Missouri DHSS reports state's first confirmed case of B.1.1.7 COVID-19 variant

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JEFFERSON CITY, MO – The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) is reporting the first identification in a Missouri resident of the COVID-19 variant, B.1.1.7, which was first detected in the United Kingdom in September 2020 and began being reported in the United States in December. The B.1.1.7 variant was identified in a sample from an adult living in Marion County. To protect the privacy of the individual, no further information will be released about the patient.

The **latest data (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant-cases.html)** from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows 611 cases have been reported to the CDC in the United States as of Feb. 4, with 33 states reporting cases thus far.

"We were notified today of this first B.1.1.7 variant case in Missouri, and we are working closely with the local public health agency to ensure appropriate measures are being taken regarding contact tracing and isolation and quarantine protocols," said Dr. Randall Williams, director of DHSS.

According to the CDC, this particular variant is associated with increased transmissibility, meaning it can spread more quickly. Early reports found no evidence to suggest that this variant has any impact on the severity of disease or vaccine efficacy.

DHSS **continues to advise (https://showmestrong.mo.gov/citizens/)** individuals to wear a mask, practice good handwashing and physical distancing, and to stay home if not feeling well. If any symptoms are experienced or COVID-19 exposure is suspected, DHSS encourages individuals to seek testing.

Although in limited supply, the COVID-19 vaccine is **now available (https://covidvaccine.mo.gov/priority/)** to health care workers, long-term care residents and staff, emergency personnel and those with specific comorbidities or who are age 65 and over. Learn more at **www.MOStopsCovid.com (http://www.mostopscovid.com)**.

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