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State provides updates on sewershed surveillance of COVID-19 variants

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JEFFERSON CITY, MO -- The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) continues to partner with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, University of Missouri – Columbia, wastewater operators and others to monitor trends of the COVID-19 by testing wastewater in communities around the state. Recently, this team has been testing wastewater to look for the presence of variants of the virus causing COVID-19. In a **press release (https://health.mo.gov/news/newsitem/uuid/b65d12af-4f16-4ff1-8cd7-8a8661754419/dhss-provides-update-on-covid-19-variant-virus-monitoring)** on February 26, DHSS announced that after the first round of sewershed testing, analysis indicated that small amounts of B.1.1.7 (UK) variant virus was present in sewage samples from 15 of 23 locations throughout the state.

DHSS has now received results from the second round of variant testing in wastewater. This testing can only be done if there is sufficient levels of viral particles present in the wastewater. With COVID-19 cases decreasing in Missouri, only 10 locations in Missouri had sufficient levels of COVID-19 virus particles to allow for such a high level of testing. Of those 10 locations, only the Coldwater Creek wastewater system in St. Louis County had a detectable level of B.1.1.7 variant virus. In the Coldwater Creek wastewater system, 25.8% of the COVID-19 viral strands were identified as having mutations typically associated with B.1.1.7. This measurement is not a direct estimate of the percent of COVID-19 positive human cases in the area that are caused by the B.1.1.7 variant. Rather, it is only an indication that the variant virus B.1.1.7 is likely present among population in this sewershed area."

"As part of our overall commitment to COVID-19 surveillance, we continue to monitor for variants both clinically and through sewershed sampling," said Dr. Randall Williams, DHSS Director. "Today, we're reporting our latest findings, and we have shared this knowledge with our public health partners."

DATE	TOWN	B.1.1.7
		A1501T/C1709A
		N501Y/A570D
17-Feb	Kansas City	<0.1%
17-Feb	Charleston	<0.1%

16-Feb	St. Louis/Lemay	<0.1%
22-Feb	St. Louis/Coldwater Creek	25.80%
23-Feb	Southwest City	<0.1%
16-Feb	Columbia	<0.1%
16-Feb	Branson	<0.1%
15-Feb	Nixa	<0.1%
17-Feb	Nevada	<0.1%
24-Feb	Blue Springs	<0.1%

St Louis Area Sewershed Surveillance Project (https://health.mo.gov/information/news/img/news-release-image-03092021.png)

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About the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services: The department seeks to be the leader in protecting health and keeping people safe. More information about DHSS can be found at **http://health.mo.gov (http://health.mo.gov)** or find us on Facebook and Twitter @HealthyLivingMo

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