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**Dallas County Health and Human Services Reports First Known Case of
SARS-CoV-2 Variant B.1.1.7 in Dallas County**

DALLAS – Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) is announcing the first known case in Dallas County of the SARS-CoV-2 variant B.1.1.7, the same variant discovered in the United Kingdom. This is the third case identified within the State of Texas to date.

The individual is a male resident of the City of Dallas in his 20's, with no recent history of travel outside of the United States. Results of genetic sequencing this week showed that the infection was caused by the variant. This is the first known case of this variant in a Dallas County resident. The individual is stable and is in isolation. DCHHS epidemiologists are involved with the investigation in identifying and notifying close contacts.

“The emergence of strain B.1.1.7, while inevitable given the mobility of the modern world and the fact that we are a major transportation hub, means that there is a strain that is 70% more contagious in our community and it will grow quickly. It's more important than ever to wear your mask around anyone you don't live with, to maintain six foot distance from other masked individuals, wash your hands frequently, think of ways to avoid crowds by using tools like online shopping, curbside or delivery and outdoor exercise, and forgo get-togethers,” said Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins. “January and February are slated to be our highest months of COVID infection rate. If we don't do all that we can now to renew our efforts to control spread, the new variant will cause an overrun of our hospitals and lengthen the time before we can beat COVID and return to our pre-COVID activities. We are vaccinating tens of thousands of people a week now at the Parkland, UTSW, and DCHHS mega-sites but it will be at least a couple of months before that begins to show any benefit in shrinking our number of infections.”

First identified in the United Kingdom this past September, the B.1.1.7 variant appears to spread more easily and quickly than other variants, and may lead to an increase in cases. It does not appear to cause symptoms that are more serious. The current scientific evidence is that the currently approved vaccines are expected to be effective against this variant.

“This is now the third identified case in Texas and we can assume there are more cases in our community due to the nature of this variant and how quickly it spreads. We must remain vigilant in our fight against this virus and continue all preventative and protective measures such as wearing our mask, washing our hands, and physical distancing. Dallas County Health and Human Services will continue to closely monitor this case and any potential contacts,” said DCHHS Director Dr. Philip Huang.

For the latest information on COVID-19 in Dallas County, please visit <http://www.dallascounty.org/covid-19/>.

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