

# Aspiranet

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## ~ December 2021 ~ Monthly Training Topic

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### COVID-19 Update – Omicron variant

In early December, Community Care Licensing (CCL) released the following information regarding the Omicron variant:

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve and remain prevalent in our daily lives. Recently, a new variant of COVID-19 was identified in South Africa and named by the World Health Organization as Omicron. It is anticipated that information about the new variant will change as additional information is known.

CCL also provided the following information from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) that outlines actions everyone can take to help slow the spread of COVID-19, including the Omicron variant:

We must remain vigilant against this variant, but it is not a cause for panic. To help detect and prevent the spread of this new variant, the State of California is increasing COVID-19 testing at our airports for arrivals from countries identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We recognize that everyone is exhausted, and the news of a new variant can be overwhelming. It is important that we collectively focus on the things we know prevent the spread of COVID-19, and its variants:

1. **Get Vaccinated:** All COVID-19 vaccines currently available in California are safe and effective at preventing serious illness from COVID-19. Vaccination will protect caregivers, facility staff, persons in care and loved ones. Children ages 5 and older are now eligible for vaccination. Additionally, adults over the age of 18 who are at least six months since their last doses of Pfizer or Moderna or at least two months since their single-dose of Johnson & Johnson are eligible for a booster.
2. **Wear Masks:** Per the latest [Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings](#) from CDPH, universal masking indoors is **recommended** statewide. However, certain counties have modified their current public health officer orders and require everyone to wear masks indoors regardless of vaccination status. You can access the latest COVID-19 guidance and masking requirements for all counties at [COVID19.ca.gov](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Masking-Requirements.aspx) and must follow the specific masking guidance for your county.
3. **Get Tested:** Everyone should immediately get tested for COVID-19 if they are feeling any symptoms, regardless of their vaccination status. COVID-19 symptoms can feel like a common cold (including just “the sniffles”), seasonal allergies, or flu. [COVID-19 testing](#) in California is free to anyone who needs it.
4. **Stay Home if Sick:** Everyone should stay home if they are feeling sick.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has provided the following information through a Fact Sheet regarding the Omicron variant:

### **What do we know about the Omicron variant?**

We are still learning about the new variant, including how it spreads and infects individuals as well as how it responds to vaccines. Here is what we know:

- New variants will continue to evolve as long as there are large proportions of unvaccinated people.
- This new variant has many mutations in important areas of the virus that impact infectiousness and the ability for immune systems to protect from infection. Some of the mutations are concerning to scientists because they are very different from other variants previously detected, and some are similar.
- We do not know at this time if this new variant causes more severe COVID-19 illness than other variants or how it might impact response to treatment.

### **What is California doing in response to the new Omicron variant?**

The CDPH is taking the following steps to protect Californians against COVID-19 and the Omicron variant:

- Monitoring for the presence of the variant in California through the California SARS-CoV-2 Whole Genome Sequencing Initiative, known as COVIDNet. This is a public-private partnership that provides California with genomic sequencing to help understand and control the spread of COVID-19. COVIDNet gives us the ability to detect variants early.
- Partnering with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to gather information and expertise to help the public, local public health departments and health care providers.
- Preparing to increase COVID-19 testing at airports across California for U.S. citizens and legal residents returning from South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Lesotho, Eswatini, Mozambique and Malawi.
- Focusing on COVID-19 vaccination and booster efforts to ensure that all Californians have access to safe, effective, and free vaccines that can prevent serious illness and death from COVID-19. It's not too late for anyone eligible to get vaccinated or boosted to protect themselves and others against COVID-19.

### **Can current COVID-19 tests detect the Omicron variant?**

Yes, current understanding is that available PCR and antigen tests should detect this variant. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is currently confirming this information.

Please sign and return this page to your Aspiranet Social Worker for training credit.

My signature below indicates that I have completed the December 2021 "COVID-19 Update – Omicron Variant" training.

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*Signature Foster Parent #1*

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*Signature Foster Parent #2*

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*Print Name Foster Parent #2*

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*Aspiranet Authorized Signature*

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Training credit: \_\_\_\_ minutes