



COUNTY OF ORANGE – HEALTH CARE AGENCY

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: September 10, 2021

Contact: HCA Communications

HCAComm@ochca.com

OC Health Care Agency COVID-19 Updates: Confirms Pediatric Death Due to COVID-19, Explains Risk of Mu Variant and Defines “Booster” vs. “Additional” Dose

(Santa Ana, California) – The OC Health Care Agency (HCA) has confirmed a COVID-related pediatric death in Orange County. In August, a child under the age of 5 with underlying health conditions died of complications related to COVID-19 infection.

“My heart goes out to this family who has lost a precious young life. This is an urgent reminder that we must do everything we can to protect our little ones, the children and infants in our community who are not yet eligible for a vaccination,” HCA Director and County Health Officer Dr. Clayton Chau said. “This means being fully vaccinated if you are over the age of 12, as well as wearing a mask indoors, avoiding crowds, maintaining physical distancing in poorly ventilated areas, and washing your hands regularly. I cannot stress enough how important these precautions are, not only to protect you, but those you care about around you.”

On August 30, 2021, the World Health Organization announced the monitoring of a new coronavirus variant called “Mu,” which was first identified in Columbia in January but has since been confirmed in at least 43 countries. There have been only 14 reported cases in Orange County, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that the Mu Variant is currently not an immediate threat in the U.S. Variant cases in Orange County can be tracked on the COVID-19 Dashboard, which is available at occovid19.ochca.com/coronavirus-in-oc.

“COVID-19 will be present in Orange County for the foreseeable future, and there is always the possibility of new versions of the virus emerging, like the Delta and Mu variants,” says Dr. Matthew Zahn, Deputy County Health Officer. “Those facts do not change the things we can do to prevent this disease. Vaccination against COVID-19 is still the most effective way to prevent you from getting sick, being hospitalized or dying from COVID-19. In Orange County, someone who is not fully vaccinated is almost six times more likely to get COVID-19 than a person who is fully vaccinated. Even with slightly declining cases in Orange County, you should get vaccinated.”

Between September 2 and September 8, the seven-day average case rate dropped from 17.4 to 13.6 per 100,000 people, with the average number of daily COVID-19 cases declining from 563 to 438. The positivity rate also decreased from 6.2 to 5.2 percent, hospitalizations from 500 to 432 per day, and ICU admissions from 138 to 129 per day. Orange County COVID-19 case counts and testing figures are updated daily, Monday through Friday, at occcovid19.ochealthinfo.com/coronavirus-in-oc.

In addition to offering vaccines to those who are not fully vaccinated, the County of Orange mobile vaccination clinics and other current vaccination channels are now offering “additional” doses of the Pfizer and Moderna mRNA vaccines to individuals ages 12 and over with moderate to severe immune compromise conditions. **The additional dose is NOT the same as a “booster” shot.**

“Please do not confuse the additional dose for immunocompromised with the booster shot; we are not yet offering booster shots, as we need to wait for authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and recommendation by the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP),” says Dr. Regina Chinsio-Kwong, Deputy County Health Officer. “Until we receive instructions from the FDA and ACIP, only people who are immunocompromised are being scheduled for the additional dose at this time.”

Individuals who are immunocompromised can schedule an appointment for their additional dose of Pfizer or Moderna by visiting Othena.com or calling the OC COVID-19 Hotline at (714) 834-2000. They can self-attest that they are immunocompromised when scheduling but will need to bring proof that they completed their second dose of Pfizer or Moderna at the time of their appointment.

An additional vaccine dose is not currently recommended by the CDC for immunocompromised persons who received a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine.

For more information about the additional COVID-19 dose for immunocompromised persons, visit <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/ThirdVaccineDoseQandA.aspx>.

For information about COVID-19 booster shots, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html>.

###