



COMMUNITY CARE NETWORK OF KANSAS

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What We Know Now

January 21, 2022

A compilation of the latest news surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic from the Community Care Network of Kansas. Published on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Visit our [COVID-19 Resources](#) page for complete, updated information.

Community Care Member Update

Today's Spotlight is on the **Community Health Center in Cowley County**, which is utilizing social media channels to reach out to

parents who might have questions about the COVID-19 vaccination for their children? The health center emphasized they “would love to talk to you about it and answer any questions you might have. Please give your child's doctor a call!”

With vaccination rates for adolescents aged 5-11 lower than any other age cohort, providers should take advantage of any and all avenues to reach their parents.

From KDHE/Governor's Office/Statehouse

Latest statistics: 681,405 positive cases, 7,319 deaths, 17,867 hospitalizations and 20 MIS-C cases (Multi-system Inflammatory Syndrome in Children associated with COVID-19). Since Wednesday, there have been 20,806 new cases, 29 deaths and 92 hospitalizations reported.

According to the Kansas WebIZ vaccination tracker ([here](#)), 4,047,121 doses have been administered in Kansas out of the 5,148,970 doses distributed. 1,899,033 people (60.8% of the population) have had



**Talk to your pediatrician about
COVID-19 vaccines for kids.**



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their first dose; 1,517,304 (52.3%) have had their second doses; and 630,784 have had their third dose of the vaccine series.

Governor Laura Kelly signs bipartisan bill to extend executive orders, providing relief for healthcare workers. The provisions in Executive Orders 22-01 ([here](#)) and 22-02 ([here](#)) were extended to January 20, 2023. House Bill 2477 allows staffing flexibility at healthcare and long-term care facilities throughout the state to address staffing shortages that continue to strain the healthcare system. Read the full news release [here](#).



Updates from Thursday's COVID-19 Update for Local Partners webinar include:

- The seven-day rolling average for new cases in Kansas is per 4,810 day; last week it was 3,456/day. For deaths, the seven-day rolling average is 9 deaths/day; last week it was 8/day.
- All 105 counties remain in “high” community transmission.
- The state has had 3,310 total outbreaks; currently there are 275 active clusters (7 in healthcare facilities).
- KDHE updated the Travel Related Quarantine Guidance and Isolation and Quarantine FAQ ([here](#)) to reflect recent CDC changes, including individuals waiting toward the end of the 5-day isolation period before using an antigen test, what it means to be susceptible to COVID-19, and who is a close household contact. The graphic on Isolation and Quarantine Release has been updated with a number of changes as well and can be found [here](#).
- KDHE reminded that it is changing its COVID-19 contact tracing program starting February 1 because of the milder symptoms being reported from the Omicron variant (news release is [here](#)). The agency has found great public reluctance to share information as well. Instead, KDHE will give the appropriate information to individuals, including Information for Close Contacts ([here](#)) depending on whether you are susceptible or not. Further guidance on If You Have or Suspect COVID-19 is [here](#), which describes symptoms and when to seek care, contagiousness and close contacts, and isolation. The Guidance for K-12 Test to Stay ([here](#)) also was updated.
- A CDC MMWR, COVID-19 Cases and Hospitalizations by COVID-19 Vaccination Status and Previous COVID-19 Diagnosis – California and New York ([here](#)), found that by early October 2021, persons who survived a previous infection had lower case rates than persons who were vaccinated alone.

- Other new Omicron literature show children are less likely to have severe symptoms from Omicron vs. Delta, that fewer patients are reporting loss of taste/smell, fatigue and muscle aches but more reporting sore throats with Omicron, and that immunocompromised patients that contracted SARS-CoV-2 for long periods of time (greater than 8 months) promoted the emergence of novel SARS-CoV-2 mutations over time.
- Kansas continues to see a decrease in vaccination trends (first and second doses remain steady, the boosters and additional doses are going down).
- The U.S. Supreme Court struck down the OSHA vaccine-or test requirement for employers by upheld the CMS vaccination mandate for healthcare workers at facilities that receive Medicaid or Medicare funding.
- Discussed the CDC data discrepancies that were mentioned in a recent U.S. News & World Report article ([here](#)). Another article pointed out why the Omicron variant is a threat to organ transplant patients. A CDC additional dose clarification chart for moderately and severely immunocompromised individuals can be found [here](#).
- Training sessions on the proper use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine are drawing to an end. Information on upcoming sessions can be found [here](#).
- The Omicron variant is 99.5% of all samples sequenced nationally, regionally it is in the high 90s percent range, and KHEL estimates from sequencing data that Kansas is in the same range. Omicron cases are being identified in western Kansas counties as well.
- FDA has tested more than 10 different antigen tests (most or all OTC) and all detect Omicron. Citizens can order up to 4/household OTC test kits online at [Covidtests.gov](#). The website directs to other testing options for immediate needs. The federal government buying all these tests has basically dried up the supply chain.
- Helpful contacts:
 - General laboratory information and LABXCHANGE, KDHE.KHELINFO@ks.gov,
 - CLIA certification questions, KDHE.CLIA2@ks.gov,
 - School testing program, Sarah.allin@ks.gov,
 - Courier service, Chad.Yamashita@ks.gov.
- The state's allocation of monoclonal antibodies decreased slightly. Kansas received 504 courses of REGEN-COV, 410 BAM/ETE, 200 ETE SOLO and 450 Sotrovimab. KDHE is out of courses for this week, so no more requests can be fulfilled. NIH has recommended IV Remdesivir (HCPSC code J0248) for therapy consideration in outpatients, but depends on the presence of variants. See the SARS-CoV-2 variant by county [here](#).
- Sotrovimab courses used are now required to be noted in the HHS Protect/Teletesting Reporting system [here](#).
- Questions about monoclonal antibody distribution in Kansas can be directed to Michael McNulty ([here](#)).
- The Public Health Communications Collaborative has messaging tips to address misinformation [here](#). The group also has a shareable PDF regarding proper mask wearing [here](#).
- The Conversation, found on the greaterthancovid.org website ([here](#)), has a variety of videos regarding vaccines.

From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

An early-release MMWR, Effectiveness of a Third Dose of mRNA Vaccines Against COVID-19-Associated Emergency Department and Urgent Care Encounters and Hospitalizations Among Adults During Periods of Delta and Omicron Variant Predominance – VISION Network, 10 States ([here](#)), found the third dose highly effective and urged all eligible adults to get it. A second related MMWR, COVID-19 Incidence and Death Rates Among Unvaccinated and Fully Vaccinated Adults With and Without Booster Doses During Periods of Delta and Omicron Variant Emergence – 25 U.S. Jurisdictions ([here](#)), found similar effectiveness.

CDC also issued several updates, including:

- COVID-19 Vaccines for People Who Would Like to Have a Baby ([here](#)),
- Reporting County-Level COVID-19 Vaccination Data ([here](#)),
- Reporting COVID-19 Vaccinations in the United States ([here](#)),
- Different COVID-19 Vaccines ([here](#)),
- Guidance for General Laboratory Safety Practices during the COVID-19 Pandemic ([here](#)),
- Overview of Testing for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) ([here](#)),
- How to Select, Wear and Clean Your Mask ([here](#)),
- COVID Data Tracker Weekly Review ([here](#)),
- Cases in the U.S. ([here](#)), and
- Overall U.S. COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution and Administration ([here](#)).

From the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

HHS, through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), announced \$103 million in awards to improve the retention of healthcare workers and help respond to the nation's critical staffing needs by reducing burnout and promoting mental health and wellness among the healthcare workforce. COVID-19 has compounded rates of depression and anxiety among healthcare workers. Read the news release [here](#). HRSA also released its Health Workforce 2021 Highlights ([here](#)).

From HRSA/Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC)

HRSA updated its COVID-19 FAQ page ([here](#)) with a new section on the Health Center COVID-19 Therapeutics Program, which will provide health centers with direct allocations of oral antiviral medications (therapeutics) for the outpatient treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19. The program will supplement state/jurisdictional allocations to ensure equitable access by providing an additional supply directly to HRSA-supported health centers. The HRSA HCCT Program is beginning incrementally at select health centers that have pharmacy capacity and specialize in caring for underserved and disproportionately affected populations. In Kansas, this includes the Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas and GraceMed Health Clinic. Invitations will be sent to additional health centers as the available supply of therapeutics increases in the coming months. Read more about the program [here](#).

From the National Institutes of Health

Researchers highlight COVID-19 neurological symptoms and need for rigorous studies. Read the news release [here](#).

COVID-19 vaccination does not reduce chances of conception, study suggests. NIH-funded research shows infection can affect male fertility. Read the news release [here](#).

From the National Association of Community Health Centers

NACHC presented an Office Hours regarding the CMS Omnibus COVID-19 Health Care Staff Vaccination Interim Final Rule (CMS IFR), which recently was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. The ruling now affects Kansas and 24 other states that had pursued legal challenges. This group of states now have the following compliance timeline:

- February 14, 2022. Phase 1, 100% of staff receive the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and facilities are required to have appropriate policies and procedures (P&P) developed and implemented.
- March 15, 2022. Phase 2, 100% of staff must have completed a primary vaccination series or granted religious/medical exemptions, and facilities are required to have appropriate P&P developed and implemented, including a contingency plan for unvaccinated staff. Contingency plans should include deadlines for unvaccinated staff to receive the require dose(s), educational outreach, and actions taken by the health centers if deadlines are not met.
- By April 14, 2022, facilities failing to maintain compliance with the 100% standard may be subject to enforcement action.

A survey process has been established to review health centers' adherence to the rule, and good-faith efforts will be recognized. CMS Surveyors will begin surveying for compliance at FQHCs starting February 14. CMS guidance on the implementation of their IFR is [here](#); their guidelines to assess and maintain compliance can be found [here](#).

Health centers must have an effective process for staff to request an exemption for medical conditions or sincerely held religious beliefs. Health centers also will be required to provide a detailed list of all staff and their vaccine status to CMS, which will be reviewed by surveyors.

NACHC has compiled technical assistance resources for health centers that can be accessed [here](#). A flyer, Vaccinate with Confidence: Tips to implement employee vaccine mandates at community health centers, can be found [here](#). An FAQ document has been developed [here](#). Clinical Considerations for COVID-19 Vaccination from CDC can be found [here](#).

From the Johns Hopkins University of Medicine

The Pandemic Data Initiative's latest offering, Two Years and Many Pandemic Data Challenges Later, can be read [here](#).

From Media Reports

Booster shots are instrumental in protecting against Omicron, new CDC data suggest. Read more at The New York Times [here](#).

U.S. hospitals, besieged by Omicron, brace as deadlines loom from a vaccine mandate. Read more at The New York Times [here](#).

