

Press Release

January 2, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Dr. Sharon Harris: 516- 676-2008

safeglencove@yahoo.com

SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: New COVID-19 Variation-New York Data

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a new COVID-19 subvariant, JN.1, is responsible for an increasing share of coronavirus hospitalizations in New York and the surrounding region. The new variant is emerging as another, HV.1, remains dominant, according to public health officials. CDC data shows COVID-19 hospitalizations were up 1.55 percent nationwide for the two-week period ending Dec. 9. JN.1, which emerged in August, represented more than 21 percent of new cases, but HV.1 was still the dominant coronavirus strain in the United States, causing more than 29 percent of cases. In the region including New York, according to the data, the JN.1 variant represents 31.7 percent of the total cases.

It is important to note that fewer people were hospitalized for COVID at this time last year, and nowhere near the peak of 150,650 hospitalizations on Jan. 15, 2022. Nonetheless, public health officials are worried about JN.1 as the number of people who have gotten the updated vaccine remains low. The CDC expects the booster to protect against the JN.1, and new COVID tests should detect it and other strains.

New York State data indicates that statewide, only 10.6 percent of the population has received the new COVID-19 booster, with 12.8 percent of that number, adults, and 2.7 percent children up to 18. The CDC maintains there's no evidence the symptoms of JN.1 are more severe than for other strains, and the severity of illness usually depends on the person's immunity. While symptoms don't change much as the virus mutates, this one in particular evolves quickly, raising concern it may be better at evading immune systems.

The variant evolved from BA.2.86, or Pirola, an Omicron variant/ Noting the number of changes to its spike proteins — more than 30 — scientists worried last summer it might mutate beyond the capacity of vaccines and antibodies to fight it. The first U.S. cases of JN.1 were reported in September. The number of cases increased from 3.5 percent in mid-November to the current 21 percent, according to the CDC estimates. The increase comes as two other respiratory illnesses, seasonal influenza and RSV, are also increasing hospitalizations. The best thing families can do as they gather for the holidays is to make sure everyone is vaccinated although it usually takes a couple of weeks for protection to develop.

Additionally, experts advise, people who have symptoms should stay home. If that's not possible, consider masking. Hosts should arrange seating to allow for social distancing if possible, encourage hand-washing and strategically place hand sanitizer and tissues in areas where guests will be gathering.

To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the COVID-19 Epidemic at www.safeglencove.org.