OFFICE OF THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY EXECUTIVE
ANGELA D. ALSOBROOKS

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
December 21, 2021

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY URGES CAUTION DURING THE HOLIDAYS AMID RISING COVID-19 CASES ACROSS THE REGION AND STATE

Residents Encouraged to Get Vaccinated and Boosted, Get Tested, Wear a Mask, and Use Good Judgment to Keep Their Loved Ones Safe

LARGO, MD – Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks held a press conference today urging residents to be cautious over the holiday season, as case numbers continue to dramatically rise across the region and State of Maryland. Vaccinations, getting tested and wearing masks remain the best protection against COVID-19 and the new Omicron variant.

"While we have made tremendous progress as a County, consistently having one of the lowest infection rates in the State over the last few months, we are experiencing another winter surge of COVID-19," said Alsobrooks. "What's different about this year than last year is now, we have more tools at our disposal to fight back against COVID-19. We urge residents to take precautions to slow the spread of this virus and keep your loved ones safe during this holiday season."

Holiday Guidance for Residents

The County is encouraging residents to get vaccinated who have not yet done so already, and encouraging parents to get their children five and older vaccinated as soon as possible. In addition, the County is encouraging residents who are already vaccinated to get a booster shot for added protection against COVID-19 and the new Omicron variant.

Studies cited by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that protection against the Omicron variant is up to 38 times higher when people get a booster shot. In addition, a booster shot can increase protection against feeling symptoms from Omicron by 75%. All residents 16 and older are now eligible for a booster shot. Residents who received Pfizer or Moderna can get a booster shot six months after the second dose, and residents who received Johnson & Johnson can get a booster shot two months after the single dose shot. Residents can find the nearest vaccine site at mypgc.us/COVIDVaccine.

The County is also encouraging residents to get tested if they are travelling for the holidays, if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, or if they have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19. The County is operating a free COVID-19 testing site at Bunker Hill Fire Station that is open Monday through Friday, from 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM. The County also has a COVID-19 testing site locator, which can be accessed at health.mypgc.us/COVIDTesting.

The County is urging residents to exercise caution with family gatherings this holiday season. Residents should use their best judgment and make the best decisions to protect their families, including considering a more intimate setting with vaccinated family and close friends. Finally, residents are reminded to continue following the indoor mask mandate, wearing a mask when indoors at any public venue.

COVID-19 Data

Based on statewide data and data from neighboring jurisdictions in the region, as well as data from the County Health Department's contact tracers, County health officials are certain Prince George's County is experiencing a surge in COVID-19 cases.

Prince George's County does not have County-level case rates or infection rates due to the cyberattack that impacted the State's COVID-19 tracking data. However, the State began reporting statewide data again yesterday. That data shows Maryland has experienced an increase of 28,341 cases since December 3. Additionally, the positivity rate went from 5.4% on December 3 to nearly 10.3% on December 20, which is an 89% increase in a little over two weeks.

Without County-level data, the County has been looking at nearby jurisdictions, which shows a concerning trend across the region. In the District of Columbia, one month ago on November 20, the weekly case rate per 100,000 residents was under 100 cases. As of December 21, it is 356 cases. In Fairfax County, on November 20, the weekly case rate per 100,000 residents was 63 cases. As of December 21, it is over 160 cases. In Alexandria, on November 20, the weekly case rate per 100,000 residents was 77 cases. As of December 21, it is over 280 cases.

Vaccination Data

According to the CDC, over 78% of adults 18 and older in the County are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. When including everyone over the age of five, 72% of residents are fully vaccinated. Finally, almost 90% of seniors are fully vaccinated.

###