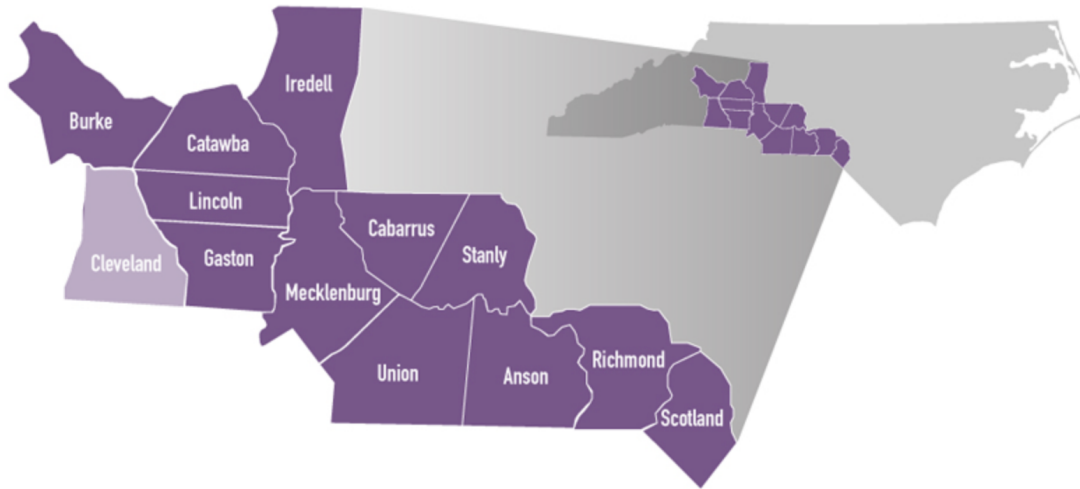


# LONG TERM CARE NEWSLETTER

January, 2022

Volume 2 Issue 1



## Highlights from December 2021:

### REGIONAL UPDATE & WELCOME

## Welcome

WRITTEN BY RONALD HENSCHER, MPH

Welcome to 2022; let us hope that this year will lead us in a healthier and safer direction. The end of 2021 introduced the Omicron variant of COVID-19 to our already mounting challenges in the workplace. This month's newsletter will be discussing this variant. In addition, we will be reviewing data from both the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention and the John Hopkins Medicine website.

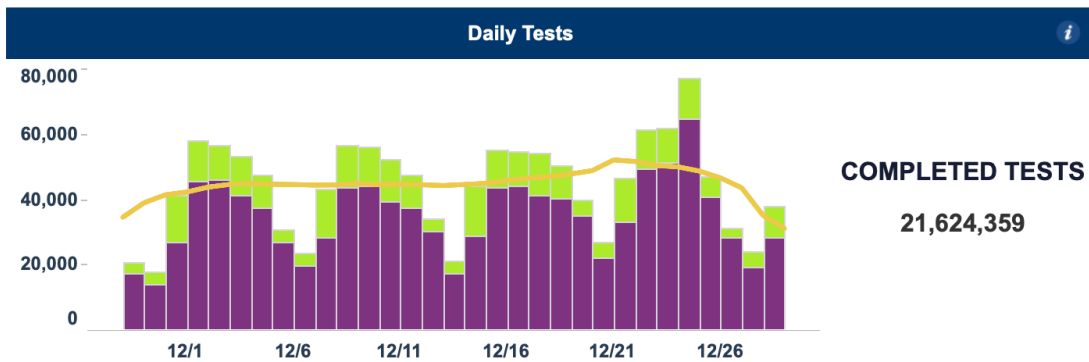
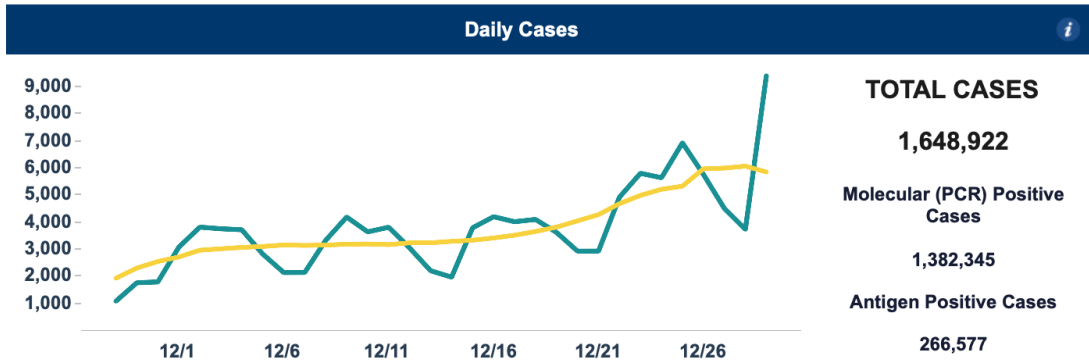
The COVID-19 state dashboard section will review the data from December 2021 and examine the data from January to December 2021. In addition, the infection prevention section will be discussing the new CDC updates that shorten recommended isolation and quarantine period for the general population.

There is still time to register for several of the training offerings listed in last month's education corner. Several of the courses now listed are in person, while others are in a distance-learning format. Please check to see which style of education the training is before you register.

# State Dashboard Data

## DATA COLLECTED FROM STATE DASHBOARD

Updated Monday - Friday by approximately 12:00 p.m.  
Last updated December 29, 2021 at 11:50 a.m.



County	Cases 11/29/21	Deaths 11/29/21	Cases 12/30/2021	Deaths 12/30/2021	Active LTC Outbreaks 12/30/2021
Anson	4,030	83	4,217	85	2
Burke	16,160	245	16,867	250	2
Cabarrus	34,283	347	37,133	375	13
Catawba	29,301	440	31,232	460	1
Cleveland	18,929	315	19,945	324	3
Gaston	41,633	631	44,781	651	11
Iredell	30,231	332	32,897	348	6
Lincoln	15,777	118	16,940	119	1
Scotland	5,856	109	6,154	110	0
Stanly	12,164	198	12,779	212	3
Union	38,050	363	40,980	388	10
Mecklenburg	162,362	1,274	176,994	1,314	27

The above figures were gathered from the statewide COVID dashboard on both November 29, 2021 and December 29, 2021. The figures are compounding from the initial outbreak of COVID-19 (NCDHHS, 2021).

# MEDICAL COUNTERMEASURES: POINT OF DISPENSING (POD), PLANNING AND RESPONSE

MGT-319

DHS/FEMA-funded course



FEMA

TEXAS A&M ENGINEERING



EXTENSION SERVICE

National Emergency  
Response and Recovery  
Training Center



FEMA

## Education Corner

This month's education spotlight will focus on the upcoming course MEDICAL COUNTERMEASURES: POINT OF DISPENSING (POD), PLANNING, AND RESPONSE. MGT-319. Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service will be holding the class on February 22 & 23, 2022. The class's location is at 500 Dalton Ave., Charlotte, NC. The course will be adhering to social distancing guidelines in the classroom.

This training course enhances jurisdiction preparedness and emergency response efforts by teaching how to exercise and revise a plan that utilizes an all-hazards, whole community approach toward a medical countermeasures event. Assists with coordination of planning, training, and responding to a Medical Countermeasure (MCM) response for a public health incident. This course responds directly to the National Preparedness Goal applies to the delivery of medical countermeasures to exposed populations.

Topics for the course include:

Category A, B, C Agents, natural hazards, man-made, or terrorism events.

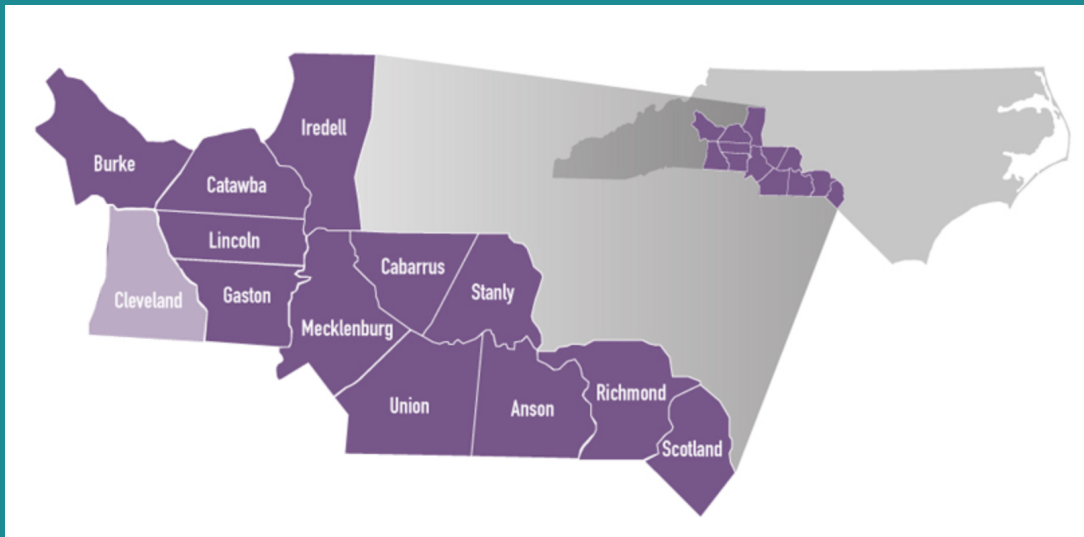
- Point of Dispensing Command Structure for planning, execution, and demobilization of a jurisdictional response
- Emergency Use Authorizations (EUA)
- Discussions as it applies to local Emergency Support Function (ESF-8 and ESF-6)
- Public Health Preparedness Capabilities

Long-term care facilities are a large target for the services rendered by PODS. By attending this course, you will not only have a better understanding of the POD system, but you can bring an LTC voice to the discussion!

Prerequisites include: FEMA / SID Number, Students must register and bring a copy of their SID number to class. Register online: [cdp.dhs.gov/femasid](http://cdp.dhs.gov/femasid).

This course is approved and accredited for continuing education hours from ENA- Emergency Nurses Association, AAFP - American Academy of Family Physicians, and Texas Department of State Health Services - EMS

You can register for this and many other courses [HERE](#).



# Current Events: Omicron Variant

WRITTEN BY RONALD J HENSCHER, MPH

On November 24, 2021, the world was introduced to the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2, B.1.1.529 by the World Health Organization. The first detection of this virus strain surfaced in both Botswana and South Africa. The variant officially became named the Omicron variant on November 26, 2021. A few days later, on December 1, 2021, the first case of the Omicron variant was detected in the United States (CDC, 2021). As of December 20, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) detected the omicron variant in most states, including North Carolina.

A month later and we are still learning about this variant. In a report from John Hopkins Medicine, Robert Bollinger, MD, MPH, when asked if Omicron was more severe than the Delta variant of the virus, said, "For omicron, there are very limited data on this." continuing to say, "But, so far, the answer appears to be no." (John Hopkins Medicine, 2021). The CDC supports this by acknowledging that more data is needed to discern if the variant causes a significant increase of severity amongst the vaccinated population. The CDC initially said that the variant would likely spread faster than the delta variant, even though those with no infection symptoms, but as of December 28, 2021, has stated that the Delta variant still appears to be the dominant or more severe variant in the United States (CDC, 2021).



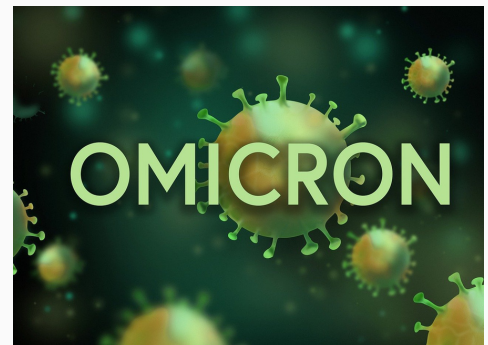


## Current Events: Omicron Variant

WRITTEN BY RONALD J HENSCHEL, MPH

What can we do to protect ourselves, staff, residents, and patients against this variant? The answer echos the answer after the identification of the delta variant. "Current vaccines are expected to protect against severe illness, hospitalizations, and deaths due to infection with the Omicron variant." (CDC, 2021). Doctor Bollinger from John Hopkins Medicine echos the CDC saying, "My own expectation is that being fully vaccinated, including boosters, will still provide a reduced risk of hospitalization and death." (John Hopkins Medicine, 2021). The majority of vaccinated cases of Omicron variant patients are not hospitalized and do not require supplemental oxygen.

After a long holiday season, one would expect more information to surface about the variant and vaccines. However, no matter where you look, infected cases are rising. This increase is no surprise to anyone due to the holidays. Until we know more, the best we can hope to do is to stress the importance of proper personal protective equipment, hand washing, and above all else, vaccination.





## Infection Prevention Discussion

### CENTERS FOR DEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION QUARENTINE GUIDELINES

This month's infection prevention section will be less instruction and more of a discussion starter. Recently we have received news of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) making changes to COVID guidance for the general public and healthcare workers. We will discuss both since staff, and the resident's families are contributors to in-house outbreaks. As of December 23, 2021, "Healthcare workers with COVID-19 who are asymptomatic can return to work after seven days with a negative test, and that isolation time can be cut further if there are staffing shortages." They continued stating that "Healthcare workers who have received all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses, including a booster, do not need to quarantine at home following high-risk exposures." (CDC, 2021)

An important note is that isolation relates to behavior after a confirmed infection. Therefore, quarantine is following exposure to the COVID-19 but without a confirmed infection.

Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the director of the CDC, stated on their website, "As the healthcare community prepares for an anticipated surge in patients due to Omicron, CDC is updating our recommendations to reflect what we know about infection and exposure in the context of vaccination and booster doses. Our goal is to keep healthcare personnel and patients safe and to address and prevent undue burden on our healthcare facilities. Our priority remains prevention—and I strongly encourage all healthcare personnel to get vaccinated and boosted." (CDC, 2021).

These changes to the healthcare worker guidance may offer some relief to many facilities as we move through and following the holiday season. How will this change impact your facility? Does your corporation or facility have stricter protocols in place?



## Infection Prevention Discussion

### CENTERS FOR DEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION QUARENTINE GUIDELINES

The changes to the general population guidance from the CDC also were recently altered. For the general populace that has tested positive, everyone, regardless of whether they have been vaccinated, must isolate for five days at home; if you have no symptoms, you may leave your home at the end of that five days. Once you have made it through those five days, you still will need to wear a mask for an additional five days when around other people (CDC, 2021).

The quarantine rules have also changed. The first guidance pertains to someone that Has received a booster OR Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine within the last six months OR Completed the primary series of the J&J vaccine within the previous two months. They must wear a mask around other people for ten days, and if possible, they must test on day five. During that ten days, if they experience symptoms, they will need to be tested and begin isolation. The guidance for people who have completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over six months ago and have not received a booster OR have completed the primary series of J&J over two months ago and have not received a booster shot OR Are unvaccinated. They are to stay home for five days. After that, continue to wear a mask around others for five additional days. If you cannot quarantine, you must wear a mask for ten days. If possible, they are to test on day five as well. If you develop symptoms get a COVID-19 test during quarantine and begin isolation at home (CDC, 2021)

These changes to the guidelines and everything related to the pandemic will constantly evolve. We will attempt to keep everyone up to date with changes. Until then, stay safe, healthy, and happy new year!

If your facility is experiencing an emergency shortage personal protective equipment (PPE) and need to request PPE from the state please use the <https://www.nc.gov/covid-19/covid-19-orders-directives> link. The webpage not only has the direct link for ordering the supplies but the instructions on how to order the supplies so that you receive what you need in a timely manner.

## Looking forward:

IF THERE IS A TOPIC THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE DISCUSSED IN OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER, PLEASE REACH OUT TO ME AT [RONALD.HENSCHEL@ATRIUMHEALTH.ORG](mailto:RONALD.HENSCHEL@ATRIUMHEALTH.ORG).

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