



# Regence

*Group Administrators*

An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

December 13, 2021

## **To Our Valued Clients and Partners,**

Since our last newsletter, we've seen a new Variant of Concern, Omicron, emerge and the CDC expands its recommendations for booster doses to all adults as weekly case and death rates start to climb again following five weeks of relative improvements. The CDC's tracking of the current US seven-day average of cases is about 103,800 per day, the seven-day average of hospital admissions is about 6,800 per day, and the seven-day average of daily deaths is about 1,100 per day.

Accordingly, within the last two weeks, the CDC introduced state-level reporting on the rates of adults 18 years and older who are fully vaccinated AND have received a booster. Oregon, Idaho, and Washington are all at 30% and Utah is at 23.5%. Nationally, this metric ranges from a low of 6.6% in New Hampshire to a high of 42.5% in its neighboring state, Vermont.

Across our region, according to each state's health department, the fully vaccinated rate for people 5 years and older is 56.6% in [Idaho](#), 61.2% in [Utah](#), 63.2% in [Oregon](#), and the fully-vaccinated rate for people 12 and over is 74.9% in [Washington](#).

Today, full vaccination rates for those age 5 and over vary widely between states ranging from a low of 49.2% in Wyoming to a high of 77.9% in Rhode Island and a national average of 63.9% according to the CDC.

### **The Omicron Variant:**

The CDC now has a full page on its website dedicated to [what you need to know about the Omicron variant](#). The CDC classified the Omicron variant as a Variant of Concern on November 26, 2021. Omicron was first detected in the US on December 1<sup>st</sup>. While Omicron is now confirmed in over 50 countries and 19 states in the US, the Delta variant still accounts for 99.9% of all US COVID-19 cases.

On December 7<sup>th</sup>, the CDC urged all eligible Americans to get vaccinated or boosted as the best defense to COVID-19 including Omicron. Also, on December 7<sup>th</sup>, the FDA published [new information](#) for clinical and laboratory staff around tests that may be impacted by the Omicron variant.

### **Booster and Vaccine Update**

On November 29<sup>th</sup>, CDC Director, Dr. Rochelle Wallensky, strengthened the CDC's COVID-19 Booster dose recommendations for all fully-vaccinated adults 18 years and older to six months after their initial Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine series or two months after their initial J&J vaccine. The following groups are now eligible for booster shots:

## We're Here for You

Our focus, dedication, and support remain steadfast as we navigate these unique times with you. Know that our Care Management nurses are reaching out to those members diagnosed with COVID-19 to help them access the care and resources they need to recover safely. Thank you for your continued trust in our organization. We are in this with you and hope that you and yours stay safe and healthy. Please reach out to your Account Manager if you have any questions or if there's anything we can do to help.

Best Regards,

**Lindsay Harris, MPP** *President*

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