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### **First COVID-19 Variant Detected in Winnebago**

*A mutated COVID-19 strain called B.1.1.7 has now been confirmed in Winnebago*

Winnebago, NE – Winnebago Comprehensive Healthcare System (WCHS), comprised of the Winnebago Public Health Department (WPHD) and Twelve Clans Unity Hospital (TCUH), has confirmed that an individual living in Winnebago tested positive for a COVID-19 variant that was first identified in the United Kingdom (UK) and is called B.1.1.7. This variant is a mutated strain of the virus that causes COVID-19, and is known to spread quicker and be deadlier than other COVID-19 variants.

Similar to the flu, these viruses constantly change through mutation and cause new variants of the virus to occur over time. These variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 have been confirmed in the United States and globally. Scientist are still studying these variants, but they do seem to spread more easily than other variants and have led to an alarming increase in the number of cases of COVID-19 and deaths associated with it.

With the confirmation of this variant in the community, it is important that preventative measures be reinforced to slow the spread of COVID-19 and its variants. These precautions include wearing a well-fitted face mask, maintaining a six-foot distance between others, washing your hands and sanitizing frequently, and getting the COVID-19 vaccine. Existing patients at Twelve Clans Unity Hospital or the Winnebago Public Health Department who are 16 years and older can sign-up for the COVID-19 vaccine by calling (402) 878-2258 or by filling out the form and submitting it online at [www.WinnebagoPublicHealth.com/VaccineWaitingList](http://www.WinnebagoPublicHealth.com/VaccineWaitingList). The Pfizer vaccine that is administered in Winnebago is about 95% effective at preventing COVID-19 and its variants. In general, vaccinated individuals who are infected with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms and are at less risk of mortality. An estimated 59% of the Winnebago population that is 16 years old and over has received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine so far.

*About: WCHS is operated by the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska and consists of two divisions. Twelve Clans Unity Hospital is a 13-bed state-of-the-art healthcare facility that serves an estimated 10,000 Native Americans who live on the Winnebago Reservation and in the surrounding region. Healthcare services provided by the hospital include an outpatient clinic, inpatient care, pharmacy, radiology, emergency care, medical laboratory, physical therapy, social services, and more. The Winnebago Public Health Department strives to create and maintain a healthy community by providing a wide range of total health and wellness programs. These programs include physical, mental, safety, and social services that benefit the Winnebago community.*

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