



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Office of Communications (614) 644-8562

Ohio Department of Health Clears Backlog of Antigen Tests

Spike in one day cases includes daily reported cases plus backlog

COLUMBUS – Today the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) reports the Bureau of Infectious Disease has cleared the backlog of pending files that dated back to November 1, causing a one-day spike in cases, bringing today's reported case total to 25,721. Included in the reported cases for today are the results from approximately 13,000 that were part of the report backlog. The onset date for these cases have been backfilled and appropriately recorded. The note about pending files has been removed from the website.

"After understanding more about antigen tests, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), changed their case definition in August allowing antigen tests to be included in case counts without additional verification," said ODH Chief Medical Officer Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff. "ODH is now aligned with CDC's current definition and we will begin reflecting those tests immediately in our daily reported case counts moving forward."

At the beginning of the pandemic, only PCR tests were available for the diagnosis of COVID-19. As antigen tests were developed in the spring, the CDC issued guidance that allowed for a positive antigen test to be counted as a probable case only if additional criteria were met. The additional criteria included either an epidemiological link to a known case of COVID-19, or symptoms of COVID-19.

As healthcare providers and public health professionals have become more familiar with antigen tests, and it plays a greater role in the overall testing strategy of the state, ODH will now be adopting the CDC definitions. All cases, whether confirmed or probable, from a PCR or antigen tests, will still go through the same case investigation and interview process. The adoption of new case definitions simply allows for ODH to count probable cases from antigen tests in a more timely manner, which means all Ohioans will have a more accurate, real-time understanding of the spread of COVID-19.

For the public, the information seen on coronavirus.ohio.gov will largely remain the same. Users will still be able to see cases by total counts, confirmed counts, and probable counts on the main dashboard. On the testing dashboard, users will be able to toggle between PCR-only, antigen-only, and combined testing volumes and positivity rates. Ohio will add these test results to our positivity calculation in the coming days.

More information on the overall numbers can be found on the coronavirus.ohio.gov website.

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246 North High Street 614 I 466-3543
Columbus, Ohio 43215 U.S.A.

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