



# COLORADO

Department of Public  
Health & Environment

HEALTH ALERT NETWORK BROADCAST

MESSAGE ID: 04142021 08:00

FROM: CO-CDPHE

SUBJECT: HAN UPDATE | COVID-19 UPDATE - SARS-CoV-2 P.1 Variant Detected in Colorado

RECIPIENTS: Local Public Health Agencies / IPs / Clinical Labs / EDs / ID Physicians / Coroners

RECIPIENT INSTRUCTIONS: Local Public Health Agencies - please forward to healthcare providers

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## HEALTH UPDATE | COVID-19 UPDATE - SARS-CoV-2 P.1 Variant Detected in Colorado| April 14, 2021

Health care providers: Please distribute widely in your office

### Key points

On April 5, CDC notified CDPHE of two Colorado residents with confirmed SARS-CoV-2 P.1 variant. Specimens were collected in mid-March and sequenced at a commercial laboratory. As of April 13, a total of 16 Colorado cases have been confirmed as having the P.1 variant.

- CDPHE and local public health agencies are investigating the cases to determine possible exposures and performing contact tracing to determine if the P.1 variant has spread to others.
- Spread of the P.1 variant has already been documented in the United States, and it is likely that other individuals in Colorado are infected with this variant.
- The P.1 variant may be more contagious and may be more likely to cause reinfection in individuals previously infected with SARS-CoV-2.
- Clinical samples from individuals suspected of having the P.1 variant or other variants of concern should be sent to the CDPHE lab for sequencing.
- Vaccination with any of the EUA-authorized vaccines for SARS-CoV-2 continues to be recommended for all Coloradans and is expected to reduce both infection and severity of illness caused by the P.1 variant. Please see previous HAN from April 13 regarding the current pause on Johnson and Johnson vaccine administration in Colorado.

## Background information

The P.1 variant is a variant of SARS-CoV-2, which was first identified among travelers from Brazil arriving in Japan. The P.1 mutation contains the spike protein mutation N501Y in common with the B.1.1.7 (“UK”) and B.1.1351 (“South Africa”) variants, and also contains additional mutations of the spike protein at K417T and E484K (also found in B.1.1351). These mutations are believed to cause the virus to be more transmissible and to increase the likelihood of reinfection among individuals previously infected with SARS-CoV-2

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/scientific-brief-emerging-variants.html>).

The P.1 variant has demonstrated a moderate impact on neutralization by some monoclonal antibodies, including the combination of Bamlanivimab and Etesevimab. Convalescent plasma from patients recovered from SARS-CoV-2 may also be less effective in treatment of patients infected with the P.1 variant. Additional information is available at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/variant-surveillance/variant-info.html> or by reviewing the FDA EUA Fact Sheets (Section 15): <https://www.fda.gov/media/145802/download> and <https://www.fda.gov/media/145611/download>.

Laboratory studies looking at neutralization of the P.1 variant by sera from vaccinated people have shown mixed results, with at least one study showing good neutralization by vaccine serum (for Pfizer) but another showing decreased neutralization with Pfizer and Moderna. How these results might correlate to vaccine effectiveness is still unknown and data from clinical trials is currently lacking. There is also limited pre-print data that showed increased prevalence of the P.1 variant was associated with a higher case fatality rate

(<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.03.24.21254046v1>).

## Recommendations / guidance

On April 5, 2021, CDPHE was notified by CDC of two Colorado residents with P.1 variant sequenced at a commercial laboratory. CDPHE and local public health agencies are investigating to determine possible exposures, and performing contact tracing to determine if the P.1 variant has spread to others. Spread of the P.1 variant has already been documented in at least 31 different jurisdictions in the United States, and it is likely that other individuals in Colorado are unknowingly infected with this variant. CDC has updated its variant tracker to report proportions of variants here: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#variant-proportions>. Colorado-specific variant information can be found on the CDPHE website here: <https://covid19.colorado.gov/data>.

Providers should not wait for sequencing results to make treatment decisions for COVID-19, including deciding whether to prescribe FDA EUA approved therapies, such as monoclonal antibodies and convalescent plasma.

Providers should continue to recommend vaccination with any of the authorized vaccines for COVID-19, as these will provide protection against all circulating lineages of SARS-CoV-2.

Individuals known or suspected to have been exposed to the P.1 variant should quarantine for a full 14 days from the date of last exposure.

## More information

- CDPHE COVID-19 web page: [covid19.colorado.gov](https://covid19.colorado.gov)
- CDC COVID-19 web page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- CDC information on the SARS-CoV-2 variants: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant.html> and <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-emerging-variant.html>
- CDPHE COVID-19 Data Page (scroll to bottom for county-by-county variant case counts): <https://covid19.colorado.gov/data>

**CDPHE Disease Reporting Line:** 303-692-2700 or 303-370-9395 (after hours)