



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Jan. 5, 2021

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## First Case of COVID-19 Variant Identified in Georgia

**Atlanta** – The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) is announcing Georgia’s first case of COVID-19 variant B.1.1.7, the same variant discovered in the U.K. and in several other countries and U.S. states. The variant was discovered during analysis of a specimen sent by a pharmacy in Georgia to a commercial lab.

The Georgia resident is an 18-year-old male with no travel history, and is currently in isolation at home. DPH is working to identify close contacts of the individual and will monitor them closely and test them for the variant.

Preliminary epidemiologic information suggests that this variant is significantly more contagious than the SARS-CoV-2 virus. So far, there is no evidence that the B.1.1.7 variant causes more severe illness or increased risk of death.

“The emergence of this variant in our state should be a wake-up call for all Georgians,” said DPH Commissioner Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H. “Even as we begin roll out of a COVID-19 vaccine, we must not let down our guard and ignore basic prevention measures – wear a mask, social distance and wash your hands frequently.”

DPH, in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), will continue to watch for emerging COVID-19 variants and will provide more information as it becomes available.

For more information about COVID-19 <https://dph.georgia.gov/novelcoronavirus> or <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

For updates on COVID-19, follow @GaDPH and @GovKemp on Twitter and @GaDPH and @GovKemp on Facebook.