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Dear Residents,

It has been an incredibly long 26 months since the COVID-19 pandemic began. While we are seeing fewer masks, more travel plans, shorter lines for testing and less individuals receiving COVID-19 vaccinations and booster shots. I want to urge everyone to remain vigilant as the pandemic is not over.

Local cases are continuing to go up and many cases are not being reported due to home tests. Thankfully we are not seeing an increase in hospitalizations at this time specifically due to COVID-19. However, our doctors' offices and emergency rooms have been busy attending to not only the COVID-19 patients, but other emerging infectious diseases including influenza and norovirus. The most predominant strain we are seeing in New Jersey is the Omicron BA.2 subvariant.

All residents are encouraged to continue to wear masks when in large, crowded places or while traveling. Get vaccinated if you haven't and boosted as they become available to your age group. If you are exposed to COVID-19 or feel sick, get tested. If you feel symptomatic, stay home from school or work. We have many tools at our disposal at this stage in the game such as rapid and PCR testing, therapeutics, and vaccination. On top of that, we have the knowledge of dealing with past COVID-19 surges and can handle whatever comes next.

While there appears to be new surge of COVID-19, experts are still assessing whether it was be a small or large surge. As much as we all want to forget about COVID-19 and the pandemic that is still occurring, it's important to pay attention to what is going on until COVID-19 truly becomes endemic. Stay smart and stay safe

Sincerely,

Lucy A. Forgione, MS, MCHES

Health Officer/Director of Health