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Delta variant detected in all major counties

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Department of Health's State Laboratories Division (SLD) has detected a total of 13 cases of the SARS-CoV-2 variant B.1.617.2, also known as the Delta variant of concern. The Delta variant has been found on O'ahu, Maui, Kaua'i and Hawai'i island.

"The rapid spread of the Delta variant is troubling, but not surprising," said State Laboratories Division Administrator Dr. Edward Desmond. "Cases of this particular strain of COVID-19 have doubled every two weeks in other jurisdictions so we expected it to move quickly after it was first detected on O'ahu earlier this month."

The Delta variant is more transmissible than the original SARS-CoV-2 and preliminary research shows that it results in a higher rate of severe illness than other SARS-CoV-2 variants.

"Prevention is the best treatment," said Kaua'i District Health Officer Dr. Janet Berreman. "The vaccines provide excellent protection against the Delta variant and other COVID strains. You can protect yourself and slow the spread by getting vaccinated today."

To date, nine cases of the Delta variant have been detected on O'ahu, two on Maui, one on Kaua'i and one on Hawai'i island.

"We believe the nine cases most recently identified represent seven or eight separate introductions into the state," said Dr. Sarah Kemble, the acting State Epidemiologist. "Unfortunately, we can expect case numbers to grow. People who are not vaccinated face a greater risk than those protected by vaccines."

Free COVID-19 vaccines are widely available statewide. Information on where to get vaccinated is available at <https://hawaiiicovid19.com/vaccine/>.

Those experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and unvaccinated people who may have been exposed to someone infected with COVID-19 are urged to be tested.

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