

COVID-19 B.1.1.7 Strain Talking Points
March 17, 2021

- 38 additional cases of the B.1.1.7. strain of the COVID-19 virus have been detected in Iowa.
- This increase in the number of detected variants provides further support to show we know this variant is circulating here in the state of Iowa, as it is across the United States.
- State and local public health officials are conducting additional epidemiological investigation to gather more details about illness, travel history, and potential exposures.
- IDPH will not share any additional identifiable information about the individuals affected, as this is confidential protected patient information.
- If asked, IDPH will share names of counties where B.1.1.7. variant has been detected.
- Based on epidemiologic and modeling data, researchers believe that the B.1.1.7 strain can be spread more easily than the original strain of SARS-CoV-2.
- Researchers believe current COVID-19 vaccines will likely protect against B.1.1.7, and additional studies are ongoing.
- It's critical for Iowans to get the vaccine when one is made available to them. Reaching herd immunity will be important in slowing virus transmission.
- The State Hygienic Lab will continue surveillance by sequencing samples weekly.
- CDC website reports this information on their website here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant-cases.html>