



GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment
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(SARS CoV-2 Variants Update)

The World Health Organization has so far confirmed four variants of concern circulating globally - Alpha, Beta, Delta and Gamma.

The Ministry of Health Wellness and the Environment recently received confirmation from the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) of the Gamma variant strain of the SARS-CoV-2 in Antigua and Barbuda. This establishes that all four (4) variants of concern have now been identified in the twin island state.

The Gamma variant of concern, first identified in Brazil in November 2020, was found in three (3) of a group of eight (8) samples taken in Antigua and Barbuda between 18 and 22 July 2021 which were sent to CARPHA for genomic sequencing. The Delta variant was identified in the other five (5) samples.

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment first became aware of the presence of the Delta variant in Antigua and Barbuda after it was found in one (1) of seven (7) samples taken between May 5 and July 2, 2021 which were sent to CARPHA for genomic sequencing.

The Gamma variant, like the Delta variant is deemed to be more transmissible causing more severe disease which results in increased hospitalization and death.

This development clearly speaks to the importance of being vaccinated and adhering to the public health measures that have been established. Vaccination, physical distancing, social distancing, wearing of the masks correctly and proper hygiene and cough etiquette continue to be the most effective measures in the prevention and control of Covid-19.

We therefore encourage all unvaccinated residents in Antigua and Barbuda to avail themselves of the Covid-19 vaccines (AstraZeneca and Sinopharm) that are now being distributed and are readily available at our vaccination sites. The two sites currently in operation are the Multipurpose Cultural and Exhibition Centre and the Villa Polyclinic which are open Mondays through to Fridays from 9am to 3pm.

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment continues to invite the general public to collaborate and participate in the fight against COVID-19.