



PR#183-22

## PRESS RELEASE

### **MoHW Confirms Presence of Omicron BA.5 Subvariant in Belize**

*Belmopan, July 12, 2022. 12:25 p.m.*

The Ministry of Health & Wellness has confirmed the presence of the Omicron BA.5 subvariant in Belize.

Recent genomic sequencing of 40 samples dated between June 1 to 28, 2022, has confirmed that 100% of the samples with the Omicron variant. Thirty-nine samples were confirmed as the BA.2 subvariant (97.5%) and one sample (2.5%) was confirmed as BA.5.

The BA.4 and BA.5 are the predominant subvariants circulating in the United States and globally at this time. Persons with these subvariants are presenting varying degrees of symptoms, ranging from runny nose, sore throat, headache, tiredness, cough, body aches and fever.

There still remains significant evidence that vaccines protect against severe disease and death from COVID-19. Some research has shown that the BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants may evade the protection of “neutralizing antibodies” from previous infection and vaccination by three to four times more than prior variants and subvariants.

The public is reminded to continue to protect the vulnerable population such as the elderly, pregnant women and persons with underlying medical conditions.

The Ministry of Health & Wellness recommends getting vaccinated if you have not done so. Continue to utilize a well-fitted face mask, especially in crowded indoor areas, and practice regular hand washing and sanitization.

**Ends**