January 13, 2022
Social Media Toolkit for Partners

Louisiana is still in our fifth, Omicron-fueled surge, and it's more urgent than ever to get vaccinated and boosted, if eligible, to stay safe. The average daily incidence of COVID has far exceeded its Delta surge peak statewide and in all regions. We are approaching our January 2021 record of 2,069 hospitalizations on a single day. Those not fully vaccinated account for a staggering 75% of those hospitalized today and 66% of deaths. According to the CDC, an unvaccinated person is 17 times more likely to be hospitalized and 20 times more likely to die than a boosted person.

We must do everything we can to protect ourselves against this highly transmissible variant. We have the tools to prevent serious illness and we should use them.

We know that layered prevention strategies are the most effective way to stay safe during a surge:
- **Get vaccinated.**
- **Get boosted.**
- Regardless of vaccination status, mask in all indoor public spaces; mask in all indoor private spaces with people who are not in your immediate household; and mask outdoors when not able to social distance.
- Work remotely, if feasible.
- Limit exposure to those outside of your immediate household.

In light of the Omicron surge, the Louisiana Department of Health has issued stronger guidance including universal masking. Universal masking has proven to be an effective strategy to reduce community spread of COVID-19, and masks work against all of the currently circulating variants. Regardless of vaccination status, masks should be worn in all public indoor settings, all indoor private spaces with people outside of your immediate household, and outdoors when not able to social distance. Cloth masks work well in protecting others, but given how transmissible Omicron is, those who wish to have added protection for themselves should consider wearing kn94, kn95 or n95 masks.

In addition, here are a few basic COVID-19 reminders:

- Stay home if you are not feeling well. People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported including fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting and diarrhea.
- Wash your hands frequently and well.
- Do not touch your face.
- Cough into your elbow or mask.

WHY OMICRON SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN LIGHTLY
It is imperative that we aggressively push back on the narrative that the Omicron variant is a less dangerous version of COVID. Here are the facts:
- Because of Omicron, more Americans are now hospitalized with COVID-19 than at any previous point in the pandemic.
- In the unvaccinated, Omicron can still cause severe illness or death.
- Omicron has proven to be a highly transmissible variant that is yet again straining hospital systems. Nationwide, healthcare workers are being repeatedly exposed, causing breakthrough infections, taking a record number of healthcare workers off the front lines. Fewer staff and more patients leads to worse care.
- Throughout the United States, those with medical emergencies are now waiting hours, if not days, for help.
- While hospitals are seeing an increase in "incidental infections," meaning that those coming to the hospital for reasons other than COVID are testing positive for the virus, the majority of people in the hospital are there DUE to COVID.
- Omicron's long-term effects (i.e., long COVID) are still unknown. People who underestimate Omicron as 'mild' are putting themselves at potential risk of debilitating disease that can linger for months or years.
- Omicron also transmits from asymptomatic individuals at a much higher rate than previous strains. For the Delta variant, asymptomatic transmission rates were between 1% and 2.6%. The rate for Omicron is over 30%.

K-12 RETURN TO SCHOOL RECOMMENDATIONS
Omicron spreads quickly and easily. This variant will cause widespread outbreaks and likely result in school closures if preventative measures are not strictly followed in these settings.
- Mask universally indoors and outside when socially distancing is not possible. Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet during mealtimes when masking is not possible.
- Most outbreaks identified in school settings have been associated with extracurricular activities. It is safest to suspend extracurricular activities until statewide incidence is below 200 infections per 100,000 people.
- Do not participate in social gatherings with individuals outside your everyday household (e.g., pep rallies, school dances) until statewide incidence is below 200 infections per 100,000 people.
- Get vaccinated and boosted when eligible.
- Children should be tested prior to the return to school.

TESTING GUIDANCE
As demand for COVID-19 testing soars and rapid tests continue to be in short supply nationwide, LDH is working to make testing more available. We've had the highest volume of tests in the last week than at any time during the pandemic. In all Parish Health Units statewide and community-based testing sites, the Office of Public Health and the Louisiana National Guard performed more than **29,000** tests last week. The week

of November 29, all Parish Health Units and community testing sites performed 2,945 tests. To do this, the Office of Public Health has opened 12 additional testing sites around the state (depending on the day) and worked with partners to help meet exceptionally high demand.

The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) has shared guidance for people unable to test.

- Do NOT go to the emergency room for COVID-19 testing if you are not seriously ill or do not need immediate medical attention.
- At-home antigen tests remain in short supply nationwide. PCR tests are free, widely available and are more sensitive than antigen tests when it comes to detecting Omicron.
- It is important to remember that tests are a snapshot in time, and a negative test does not mean you will not test positive later if you were exposed to the virus.
- When COVID-19 testing is widely available, LDH recommends testing for 1) individuals experiencing symptoms and 2) those who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- Because COVID-19 cases are increasing rapidly in Louisiana, testing may not be available for all individuals. If you believe you have been exposed you can assume you have been and act accordingly; if you have COVID symptoms, you should assume you have COVID and isolate.

- You can find testing site locations and hours at ldh.la.gov/covidtesting or you can call 211 to find a site near you.

- If you have COVID-like symptoms or test positive, you should isolate immediately and inform close contacts to quarantine to prevent further transmission. Do not wait on a contract tracer to reach out to you. If you have questions, we urge you to proactively call our contact tracing hotline – 877-766-2130. It's the fastest way to get information and guidance while in this surge.

HOW TO GET A COVID VACCINE IN LOUISIANA
CDC and LDH recommend everyone ages 5 and older get the COVID-19 vaccine. Parents with children under 18 should confirm with the vaccine provider that the Pfizer vaccine is available before making an appointment.
- COVID-19 vaccines are free and widely available at more than 1,000 locations in all of Louisiana's 64 parishes, including pharmacies, hospitals, healthcare clinics, and doctor's offices.
- For a list of locations, visit LDH's vaccine directory at covidvaccine.la.gov or visit vaccines.gov, maintained by the federal government.
- To get a list of vaccine locations near you, text your ZIP code to GETVAX (438829) in English, or VACUNA (822862) in Spanish.
- If you have questions or need help scheduling an appointment, call 211 or Louisiana's vaccine hotline at 1-855-453-0774.

SUGGESTED ACCOUNTS & LINKS

To amplify content raising awareness of this announcement, we suggest engaging with the following accounts and including one of the following links in content:

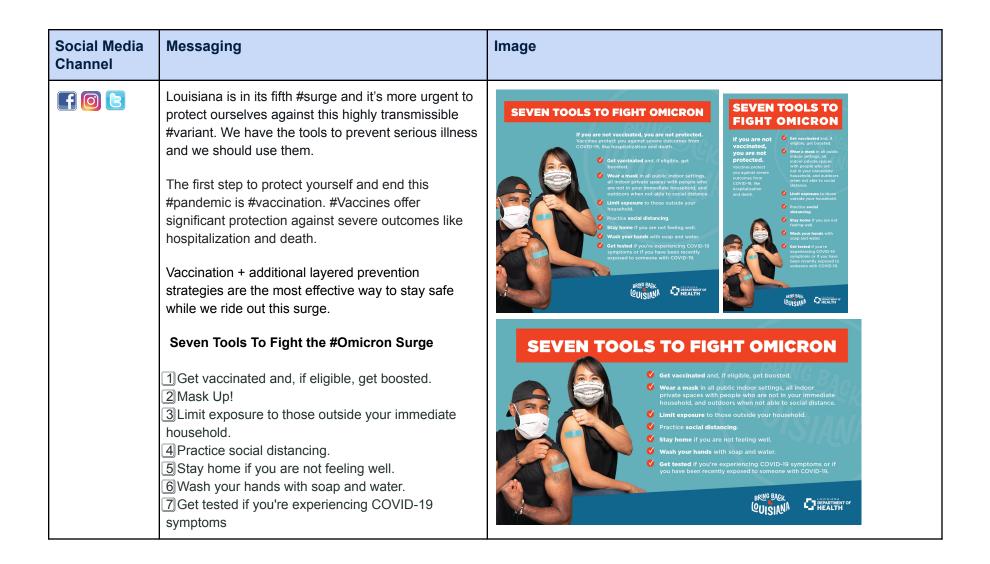|	
Bring Back Louisiana #SleevesUp ● Facebook: @BringBackLASleevesUp ● Twitter: @SleevesUpLA ● Instagram: @SleevesUpLA	**Links/Calls to Action** ● To get more info on where to get the vaccine: covidvaccine.la.gov ● For pediatric vaccine info, go to: ldh.la.gov/kidsvax ● Call 211 or Louisiana's vaccine hotline at 1-855-453-0774.
Louisiana Department of Health ● Facebook: @LADeptHealth ● Twitter: @LADeptHealth ● Instagram: @ladepthealth	**Hashtags** ● #SleevesUp ● #SleevesUpLA ● #BringBackLA ● #InItToEndIt

SUGGESTED SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

OMICRON FACT SHEET: DOWNLOAD HERE.
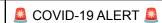
VARIOUS SIZE GRAPHICS FOR SOCIAL: DOWNLOAD HERE.

VIDEO FILES FOR SOCIAL CHANNELS: DOWNLOAD HERE.

VIDEO LINKS CHEAT SHEET: DOWNLOAD HERE.

Social Media Channel	Messaging	Image
	Louisiana is in its fifth #surge and it's more urgent to protect ourselves against this highly transmissible #variant. We have the tools to prevent serious illness and we should use them. The first step to protect yourself and end this #pandemic is #vaccination. #Vaccines offer significant protection against severe outcomes like hospitalization and death. Vaccination + additional layered prevention strategies are the most effective way to stay safe while we ride out this surge. **Seven Tools To Fight the #Omicron Surge** [1] Get vaccinated and, if eligible, get boosted. [2] Mask Up! [3] Limit exposure to those outside your immediate household. [4] Practice social distancing. [5] Stay home if you are not feeling well. [6] Wash your hands with soap and water. [7] Get tested if you're experiencing COVID-19 symptoms	

🚨 COVID-19 ALERT 🚨

More Americans are now hospitalized with COVID-19 than at any previous point in the #pandemic and our hospitals are strained.

#Omicron is surging in our state. Average daily incidence of #COVID has far exceeded its #Delta surge peak statewide and in all regions.

Getting vaccinated protects you against severe outcomes caused by COVID-19 like hospitalization and death. It is the best protection against #COVID19 and helps ease the burden on our public health systems.

Go to www.covidvaccine.la.gov to schedule your #vaccine today!

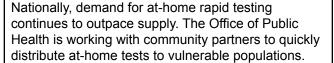|		
	GET VACCINATED and GET BOOSTED. If you are not vaccinated, you're NOT protected. The vaccine protects you against hospitalization and death caused by #COVID19. #Boosters broaden and strengthen that protection. A Pfizer-BioNTech booster shot increases antibody levels 25-fold against Omicron. Similarly, a Moderna booster shot can increase antibody levels 37-fold against Omicron. **Getting your booster has never been more urgent.** COVID-19 #vaccines are available at over 1,000 locations in all of Louisiana's 64 parishes, including at pharmacies, hospitals, healthcare clinics and doctor's offices. For a list of locations near you, visit https://bit.ly/3ilZ9Jj or text your ZIP code to GETVAX (438829) in English or VACUNA (822862) in Spanish. If you have questions, would like to speak with a medical professional or need help scheduling an appointment, call 211 or 1-855-453-0774.	
	Nationally, demand for at-home rapid testing continues to outpace supply. The Office of Public Health is working with community partners to quickly distribute at-home tests to vulnerable populations. PCR tests, however, are still widely available in Louisiana. They're free and results typically come within 24 to 48 hours. There are #COVID test sites located throughout the state. As demand for testing soars, LDH has provided guidance on what to do when #COVID19 testing is not widely available: https://ldh.la.gov/news/testingrecs	

WHY JOIN?

Members of the Louisiana Teen Vax Campaign:
● Meet monthly with public health professionals and marketing experts.
● Provide feedback swag, logos, website and messaging.
● Create and develop social media posts and infographics.
● Share the benefits of getting the COVID-19 vaccine.
● Conduct trainings and events to educate and rally peers.
● Serve as statewide ambassadors for COVID-19 vaccinations.

Anyone ages 12-17 yrs old can join the movement and take part in this leadership opportunity. Apply as an individual, form a new group/team, or through an existing youth group, sports group, team or club.

For more information: www.layouthambassadors.org.

Medical professionals AGREE. Kids 5 & up should get the COVID-19 vaccine.

✅American Academy of Pediatrics
✅American Medical Association
✅American Academy of Family Physicians
✅National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
✅Pediatric Infectious Disease Society

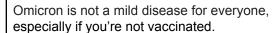|		
	We have the tools to stay safe against #omicron. LDH has issued stronger universal masking guidance. Universal masking is an effective strategy to reduce community spread of #COVID19 and works against all of the currently circulating variants. Regardless of vaccination status, masks should be worn in all public indoor settings, all indoor private spaces with people outside of your immediate household, and outdoors when social distancing is not possible. This is not forever, but it's critical to take additional actions like universal masking to get through a surge. Cloth masks work well to protect others, but Omicron is extremely transmissible. For those who want additional protection, consider kn94, kn95 and n95 masks. Mask Up! 😷	
	Omicron is not a mild disease for everyone, especially if you're not vaccinated. Even if #Omicron is half as severe, if it's causing twice as many infections, you're sending the same number of people to the hospital. Vaccines offer significant protection against severe outcomes like hospitalization and death. Booster shots broaden and strengthen that protection. For more information: covidvaccine.la.gov.	

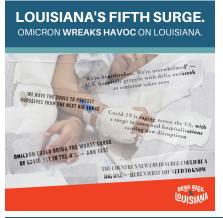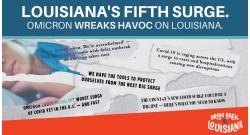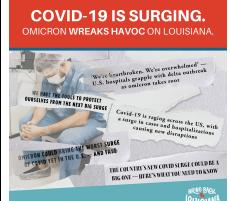|		
	The #Delta variant and low vaccination rates created a #COVID19 crisis this summer. Hospitals struggled to handle the influx. ICU beds were full and thousands of people died including 18 children. Public health officials have warned for months that the U.S. would face another Covid wave this winter. Louisiana is experiencing it's fifth wave as the Omicron variant surges across the state. What does this new surge look like? The CDC is reporting a record number of children hospitalized with COVID nationwide. Both nationwide and in Louisiana, we are seeing an increase in COVID hospitalizations among 0-4 yr olds. As of Jan 2, 2022, 92 children were admitted to the hospital with COVID - higher than any point in the Delta surge. For more information: covidvaccine.la.gov.	
	To protect yourself, get vaccinated and, if eligible, get boosted. The COVID-19 vaccine protects against severe outcomes from COVID, including hospitalization and death. If you are not yet vaccinated, you are unprotected. It's never too late to change your mind… If you have questions about vaccines, you can speak to a medical professional and learn about vaccination sites near you by calling Louisiana's vaccine hotline at 855-453-0774.	

	Omicron has a reputation for causing mild illness, yet it's fueling a sharp rise in hospitalizations. That's because Omicron is extremely contagious. Nationally, the Omicron wave is straining already exhausted hospitals and healthcare workers. It's not hard to understand. More patients and fewer staff means worse care for EVERYONE. For more information: covidvaccine.la.gov.	
	Having your child vaccinated against the virus will help prevent them from getting severe COVID-19. The shot makes them stronger and better able to fight off the virus. It also helps reduce the spread of COVID-19 and preserve in-person learning. Learn more: http://ldh.la.gov/kidsvax or call 1-855-453-0774.	
	Educators across Louisiana are urging parents to talk to their children's doctors and healthcare providers about the COVID-19 vaccines. Let's all do our part to get our children vaccinated and bring back Louisiana. Learn more: http://ldh.la.gov/kidsvax or call 1-855-453-0774.	

	☎ 877-766-2130 ☎ If you have COVID-like symptoms or test positive, you should isolate immediately and inform close contacts to quarantine to prevent further transmission. If you have questions, call our contact tracing hotline – 877-766-2130. It's the fastest way to get information and guidance while in this surge.	
	Omicron might be less severe than Delta on *average*, but that's an average…Omicron is not "mild" for everyone. In fact, more Americans are now hospitalized with COVID-19 than at any previous point in the pandemic. If you're not vaccinated, you're NOT protected. It's never too late to protect yourself and your family. Go to covidvaccine.la.gov to make an appointment today!	

	WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT OMICRON? More Americans are now hospitalized with COVID-19 than at any previous point in the #pandemic and our hospitals are strained. #Omicron is surging in our state. Average daily incidence of #COVID has far exceeded its #Delta surge peak statewide and in all regions. Getting vaccinated protects you against severe outcomes caused by COVID-19 like hospitalization and death. It is the best protection against #COVID19 and helps ease the burden on our public health systems. Go to www.covidvaccine.la.gov to schedule your #vaccine today!	