NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **CONTACT:**
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New Bivalent Covid-19 Boosters Offer Enhanced Protection

Atlanta – The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) will begin offering the new bivalent COVID-19 booster this week, as shipments of the vaccine arrive in the state. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommend the bivalent booster manufactured by Pfizer for individuals aged 12 and older; and they recommend the bivalent booster by Moderna for adults aged 18 and older.

The current COVID booster doses contain the genetic recipe for the original strain of COVID-19. The bivalent vaccine contains the genetic recipes for two versions of COVID-19; the original strain, plus the omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5, offering better protection against the currently circulating COVID-19 variants. People should wait at least two months after completing their initial vaccination or their last booster shot before getting the bivalent booster.

At this time, the bivalent vaccine is considered only a booster. It is not to be used as the initial two-dose COVID vaccine. The monovalent mRNA CVOID-19 vaccines will still be administered for the primary series of vaccine and as a booster for children under the age of 12.

Georgia is currently seeing an average of 3,000 cases of COVID reported a week. More than 89% of newly reported COVID cases are caused by the BA.5 variant. Hospitalizations and deaths from COVID continue to decrease in the state.

In addition to vaccination and boosters, basic prevention measures should also be followed to help prevent further spread of COVID and mitigate outbreaks of infection, especially in public settings: wear a mask, physically distance, and wash your hands frequently with soap and water.

For updates on COVID-19 follow @GaDPH and @GovKemp on Twitter and @GaDPH and @GovKemp on Facebook. For more information on vaccination and boosters, visit https://itsthatsimplega.ga.gov/.

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