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**Butler County**  
**General Health District**

December 22, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Wastewater Samples in Oxford Indicate an Increase in COVID-19 Spread**

BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO – Three samples taken on multiple days from the Oxford Wastewater Treatment Plant show evidence of increased COVID-19 community spread.

Environmental Health Director for Butler County General Health District (BCGHD) Carrie Yeager says, “The Ohio Department of Health continues to monitor wastewater within communities across the state.”

The Ohio Waste Water Monitory Network has been testing wastewater samples across Ohio to look for gene copies/fragments of COVID 19. “When a community experiences a sustained increase of fragments from the virus, we receive an alert that notifies us,” says Yeager.

The presence of COVID 19 in wastewater is an early indicator of COVID 19 spread in a community. COVID 19 can be found in the feces of both symptomatic and asymptomatic infected people. “Wastewater data can be one of the first indicators that notify a community that the risk of getting the disease is high,” concludes Yeager.

“Despite the excitement of vaccine approval, December has been a hard COVID month for Butler County. We shattered daily new case counts on several occasions. Hospitals have sent pleads to 'stay home' as they manage ICU occupancy and staffing shortages throughout the region, says Jennifer Bailer Health Commissioner for the BCGHD.

“The increase of COVID-19 fragments in the wastewater tells us that spread of the virus is higher than we have previously seen. When notified of such an increase, the public should consistently following public health advice on facial coverings, physical distance and hand washing. During this Holiday season when many have plans to gather and spread of the virus is high, our community should be especially vigilant,” states Bailer.

For more on the Ohio Waste Water Monitory Network visit:

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/dashboards/wastewater>

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