

April 27, 2022

To the people of Ehime,

## **Precautions for the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) During Extended Holidays**

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to everyone for your continued cooperation in preventing the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

Since January, the spread of COVID-19 due to the highly contagious Omicron variant has continued in Ehime. A “Special Infection Alert Period” was enforced for nearly three months, and strict restrictions on activities and other measures were taken. While the number of cases fluctuated constantly, considering a number of factors such as the amount of stress on healthcare providers and the gradual progression of vaccine booster rollouts, the alert level was changed to an “Infection Alert Period” on April 1, signaling a step towards balancing infection control measures with increased socioeconomic activity.

Positive cases in Ehime have remained at a constant high since then. More than 90 clusters have occurred in various settings and within various age groups, including daycare centers, kindergartens, schools, and workplaces, and there are still no signs of the outbreak subsiding.

Furthermore, according to the latest data released by the national government, the even more contagious BA.2 strain is estimated to be the cause of about 80% of the cases nationwide. Based on the prediction that the strain will spread in Ehime as well, we urge you to resume socioeconomic activities with caution and remain vigilant against the spread of infection.

The extended holiday will begin this weekend under these circumstances. It is expected that there will be a significant increase in travel across prefectural borders, which may result in an increase in cases. We are taking measures to detect the infection early on, including providing free testing at the Matsuyama Airport, a major transportation hub, and at about 120 other locations throughout the prefecture. However, in order to minimize the impact of the holiday season, your cooperation is indispensable.

During this extended holiday, we ask everyone to take the following three precautionary measures:

- ① Follow dining rules and regulations; Avoid poorly ventilated areas and crowded places.
- ② Be proactive and make use of free testing sites when traveling outside of the prefecture or when you suspect you may have COVID-19.
- ③ If you feel unwell during the extended holiday, refrain from going out and see a doctor as soon as possible.

In addition, even during the holiday season, each region has a system in place to provide medical care with doctors on-duty and at special urgent care centers.

If you have symptoms such as a fever, please contact the Health Consultation Center (089-909-3483) as soon as possible.

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Governor of Ehime Prefecture