Uninsured Texans may be hit hardest by omicron

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Last December, shortly after the omicron variant emerged, experts raised concerns that it would be effective against the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines. But in recent weeks, officials have said the Pfizer drug is highly effective against omicron, pointing to data showing the variant is less contagious and easier to detect and treat. So far, most of the cases in Texas have been in unvaccinated people, including many who are uninsured or underinsured.

But the variant poses a significant threat to uninsured Texans, particularly those who face the highest risks of severe COVID-19, such as those with conditions like diabetes, heart disease and kidney or liver disease.

The omicron variant is known to spread more easily than previous variants, making it harder for people to avoid catching it. This has led to an increase in hospitalizations and deaths among unvaccinated people, including those who are uninsured or underinsured. In fact, in the past month, more than 80% of COVID-19 hospitalizations in Texas have been in unvaccinated people, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services.

Uninsured Texans are at a higher risk than those with insurance, particularly those who face the highest risks of severe COVID-19. In fact, more than 80% of COVID-19 hospitalizations in Texas have been in unvaccinated people, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services.

In a statement, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission said it is “deeply concerned about the impact of omicron on hospitalizations and vaccination rates. "We are seeing a rapid increase in hospitalizations among unvaccinated Texans, particularly those who are uninsured or underinsured," the statement said. "We urge all Texans to get vaccinated, and to seek treatment early if they develop symptoms."