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THE NEWEST THREAT BY COVID-19

BY: SCOTT A. O'MARA

The New York Times has published an article written by Knvul Sheikh. This was published on 12/27/2023 and reflects that the COVID-19 variants are now becoming more abundant with another common strain called JN.1. This variant was found in September of 2023, and by information obtained by the writer, Sheikh, it accounted for 44% of the COVID-19 cases nationwide by mid-December of 2023. The article reflects that the speed and movement spread widely after just several months.

In the written document there is concern that the JN.1 movement is more transmittable, and is evading the immune system differently than other variants currently embedded in our society. This causes the readers to recognize that the COVID-19 variants are very strong and impacts all levels of society. There must be a particular emphasis on people that have exposures because the mandate of their employment. This would be safety personnel, whether that is a peace officer, firefighter, other safety officers that work in correctional facilities, or individuals that work in the field having physical contact with people.

The California Legislatures created a special Workers' Compensation Presumption that acknowledges COVID-19 was harshly impacting a segment of the workers that have contact with the public, these segments of workers are safety workers. This special Presumption regarding the COVID-19 allowed the safety worker faster access to medical care to cure or relieve the effects of COVID-19. This special Legislation on COVID-19 was enacted with a sunset clause ending the presumption on January 1, 2023.

The Legislative Body, and the Governor, became aware of the continued harmfulness of COVID-19 to safety workers, and other workers, and extended the sunset provision to end the presumption on January 1, 2024 by repealing of the Presumption at said time.

The ending of the Presumption on January 1, 2024, creates a change in the burden of proof placed upon the workers that are providing safety to society. Those workers with the removal of the Presumption on January 1, 2024 that developed COVID-19 outside the parameters now have to go through a higher threshold of showing the job-relatedness to COVID-19 and its variants.

The recent findings such as JN.1, and other variants that have been found in COVID, is a strong finding that the COVID-19 variants can continue to be a high risk to the public, and the safety worker. This then will cause those people that are providing protection to the general public not to

