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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19 Variant B.1.1.7. Found in Kern County

(Kern County, CA) – Kern County Public Health was notified that one case of the B.1.1.7. strain of the coronavirus has been detected in Kern County.

Viruses constantly change through mutations that create new strains of virus (called variants) over time. Some virus variants emerge and then disappear, while others persist or become common. Most variants do not have a meaningful impact. Variants become a concern when they affect COVID-19 transmission, severity, testing, treatment or vaccine effectiveness.

The variant strain was first detected in the United Kingdom and has since spread to over 200 countries. As of March 11, 265 cases of the B.1.1.7. variant have been detected in California.

Currently there is no indication that the vaccines or monoclonal antibody treatments are less effective on the B117 variant, however, there is evidence that this variant may be more severe.

Public Health encourages residents to keep taking steps that will limit transmission of the virus. This includes:

- Wearing a mask when leaving home
- Keeping physical distance of at least 6 feet apart
- Washing hand for 20 seconds
- Getting the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you are eligible.

For more information about variants in California, please visit:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/COVID-Variants.aspx>

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