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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **COVID-19 Vaccination Encouraged for Residents with Severe Medical Conditions**

*People who have underlying medical conditions are at increased risk of serious, life-threatening complications from COVID-19.*

We urge those currently eligible to get vaccinated now as the state recently announced that more groups will become eligible on April 1<sup>st</sup>. On March 15, those with severe medical conditions became eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

The severe health conditions eligible include:

- **Cancer**, current with weakened immune system
- **Chronic kidney disease**, stage 4 or above
- **Chronic pulmonary disease**, oxygen dependent
- **Down syndrome**
- **Solid organ transplant**, leading to a weakened immune system
- **Pregnancy**
- **Sickle cell disease**
- **Heart conditions**, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies (but not hypertension)
- **Severe obesity** (Body Mass Index  $\geq 40$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>)
- **Type 2 diabetes mellitus** with hemoglobin A1c level greater than 7.5%

To protect confidentiality, verification documentation of the diagnosis or type of disability is not required. Anyone meeting the eligibility requirements will be asked to self-attest that they meet the criteria for high-risk medical conditions or disabilities. View vaccine eligibility [guidelines](#).

In an effort to help residents navigate the vaccination appointment scheduling process, the Public Health Call Center will help residents navigate the MyTurn system and answer questions related to COVID-19 vaccinations. We invite residents to call 661-321-3000, Monday through Friday, from 8AM to 5PM to receive assistance. "Our goal is to remove any barriers our residents may face as they seek to schedule their COVID-19 vaccination appointments" says Brynn Carrigan, Director of Kern County Public Health. "Our call center is equipped with staff who are knowledgeable and eager to assist our community."

The Kern County Fairgrounds Mass Vaccination Clinic has open appointments this week. This clinic is ADA compliant and staffed with friendly volunteers who are eager to serve our residents. Visit [MyTurn.ca.gov](http://MyTurn.ca.gov) or call 833-422-4255.

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