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NEWS RELEASE

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COVID-19 Vaccines Are Safe, Effective and Vital for Ending the Pandemic

One of the best ways to reduce your risk of getting infected with COVID-19, becoming seriously ill, or dying from infection is to get one of the three COVID-19 vaccines available in the U.S. Even if you've had COVID-19 and recovered, you need to still get vaccinated to have complete and longer-lasting protection.

CDC reports that as of April 20, 2021, more than 87 million people in the United States had been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Of the almost 90 million fully vaccinated Americans, 7,157 people (fewer than 0.008%) have been infected with COVID-19 and less than 0.004% of people had to be hospitalized due to COVID-19. This tells us the vaccines are preventing infections and severe illnesses.

"Not only do we encourage our residents to protect themselves against COVID-19 by getting vaccinated, we ask everyone to take the vaccine to help protect your loved ones, neighbors and entire community," says Brynn Carrigan, Director of Kern County Public Health Services Department. "Vaccines are the safest and quickest way to build immunity against COVID-19."

On April 23, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) lifted its pause on the use of the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine, following a review by a federal vaccine safety review panel. On April 24, the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup concluded the J&J vaccine is safe and effective and recommended resuming use of the vaccine for all eligible Californians. In response, Kern County Public Health has informed local providers that they may resume administering the J & J vaccine.

In an effort to address our residents ongoing questions related to the vaccines, Public Health has launched a COVID-19 vaccine nurse hotline that is available from 7AM to 7PM, seven days a week. Our community is encouraged to call or text 661-677-4177 to ask their vaccine related questions. Public Health nurses are eager and equipped to assist residents with current information related to the vaccines.

The Kern County Fairgrounds Mass Vaccination Clinic offers Pfizer vaccine from the comfort of your car or walk-thru. Currently, Pfizer is the only authorized vaccine for persons 16 and 17. The clinic operates Wednesday thru Sunday, 9:30am to 4pm. Appointments can be made at www.MyTurn.ca.gov but are not required. Other vaccinating providers are available throughout the community, and can be found on MyTurn.ca.gov, or on the Vaccinating Providers Map at <https://phweb.kerncounty.com/Html5Viewer/index.html?viewer=COVID19Vaccination#>.

Today the State announced that Kern County remains in the Orange Tier (Tier 3) of the COVID-19 Blueprint for a Safer Economy. This marks the third week our county has been in the Orange Tier.

Every county is assigned to one of four tiers based on the adjusted case rate, testing positivity rate, and health equity metric. Below is a summary of Kern County's current metrics and a comparison of Kern's metrics last week:

	As of 4/27/21	As of 4/20/21	Yellow Tier Trigger
Countywide Adjusted Case Rate	3.4/100,000	3.7/100,000	<2/100,000
Countywide Testing Positivity	1.4%	1.5%	<2%
Health Equity Quartile Testing Positivity	1.5%	2.0%	<2.2%

Kern County must remain in the Orange Tier for at least three weeks before moving into the least restrictive Yellow Tier (Tier 4). Additionally, Kern must meet the Yellow Tier metrics for at least two consecutive weeks to be able to progress forward.

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