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NEWS RELEASE

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Public Health COVID-19 Dashboard Update

Today we will report a net reduction of 185 cases on the Public Health COVID-19 Dashboard. This negative number is a result of a data batch update run by the state to de-duplicate COVID-19 case records between April 28, 2020 and September 17, 2021. Had the state not run their batch process, we would have reported 402 new COVID-19 cases in Kern County today; however, the state's process removed 587 duplicate cases resulting in a net report of a reduction of 185 cases.

Today's batch update is the first time we are aware of the state running such an update. We are actively working with the state to better understand their actions. Generally, de-duplication is conducted to ensure that a case is not being counted more than once. Reasons for duplicates include: the healthcare provider and lab both reported the case, different spellings of the patient's name or address, lab result faxes are not merged with electronically reported results, and probable (antigen) and confirmed (follow up PCR) results are not merged.

It is important to note that de-duplication is a vital part of data reporting and has been conducted by Kern County Public Health since the beginning of the pandemic. Our department moved from manual detection to automated detection and launched our computer aided effort to de-duplicate data in December 2020. We took this action because the state switched from manual review of incoming test results to auto processing and removed our ability to continue our manual de-duplication efforts conducted prior to this change.

Our automated data de-duplication searches the following factors in the system:

- More than one record in the same person's account
- Same last name and date of birth at the same address
- Same first name, last name and date of birth regardless of address or other factors

Kern County Public Health's de-duplication efforts have been successful to this point; the 587 duplicates removed represent approximately 0.4% of reported cases with only two of these cases from 2021.

Public Health is currently reviewing each record included in the state's data batch and have found some issues with the state's de-duplication efforts. Therefore, will manually enter back any true positive cases. Although we do not expect to find many, we will continue to ensure that the cases reflected on our Dashboard reflect the true positive cases of COVID-19 in Kern County.

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