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NEWS RELEASE

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Eligible Residents Urged to Get COVID-19 Booster and Help Avoid Winter Surge

Current state modeling projects a potentially dramatic increase in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations this winter based on waning immunity and need for booster doses.

Recent modeling provided by the state indicates that another winter surge is a possibility and primarily influenced by waning immunity to COVID-19. During the pandemic, modeling has proven to be a valuable tool to help inform our local response as we shore up needed resources for public health, emergency medical and hospital systems during surges.

Specifically, the California COVID-19 Assessment Tool (CalCAT) shows a worst-case scenario of Kern County beginning another surge in early December 2021, reaching our peak on January 14, 2022 averaging 748 cases per day and hospitalizations peaking on January 20, 2022 with 559 hospitalizations. For context, at the height of our most recent surge, Kern peaked at an average of 411 cases per day with 336 hospitalizations and tended to follow the pessimistic modeling.

The determining factor in how Kern will trend in the modeling is the actions our community takes to ensure optimal immunity from this disease, which includes getting vaccinated and subsequently getting your booster dose when you are eligible. Additionally, the proven healthy practices of wearing a mask if not vaccinated, handwashing, staying home when sick and maintaining a healthy diet remain critical in our ongoing fight against COVID-19.

All COVID-19 vaccines continue to provide significant protection against severe illness, hospitalization, and death. However, certain populations are seeing a slight decrease in vaccine effectiveness against infection. Therefore, the CDC has recommended that certain populations obtain their booster to ensure optimal immunity. Booster doses of vaccines are very common. They are part of most childhood and adult vaccine series to ensure a person maintains immunity against infection from diseases.

A booster dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine is recommended six months after your second dose if you:

- Are 65 or older, or
- Age 18+ living in [long-term care settings](#), or
- Age 18+ and have [underlying medical conditions](#), or
- Age 18+ and are at increased risk due to [social inequity](#), or
- Age 18+ working or living in [high-risk settings](#).

A booster dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is recommended two months after your initial dose if you are 18 or older.

View state models by visiting this website: <https://calcat.covid19.ca.gov/cacovidmodels/> and view attached graphs. To find a vaccination site near you or to make an appointment at vaccination sites, visit www.kernpublichealth.com or www.MyTurn.ca.gov. Kern County Public Health is operating a COVID-19 vaccination clinic at the Kern County Fairgrounds, Tuesday through Friday from 10:30AM to 6:00PM.