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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Pediatric COVID-19 Vaccine Authorized for Children 5 to 11 Years**

Last night, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced its recommendation that children 5 to 11 years old be vaccinated against COVID-19 with the Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric vaccine. This expands vaccine recommendations to an estimated 99,526 children in Kern County in this age group and allows providers to begin vaccinating them as soon as possible.

According to the CDC, COVID-19 cases in children can result in hospitalization, death, Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) and long-term complications, such as “long COVID,” in which symptoms can linger for months. In Kern County, we have had 138 hospitalizations among those under 18 years of age, and 107 hospitalizations among those aged 5 to 17 years due to COVID-19. Also, we have had 21 cases of MIS-C identified, with 57% of those cases being admitted to the ICU.

Vaccination using the safe and effective vaccine already recommended for use in adolescents and adults in the United States, along with other preventative measures, can protect children from COVID-19, as well as reduce disruptions to in-person learning and activities by helping curb community transmission.

“This is a hopeful time for many local families who have been anxiously waiting to get their children vaccinated,” says Brynn Carrigan, Director of Kern County Public Health. “Vaccination remains the quickest and safest way to protect ourselves and our families from the impacts of COVID-19.”

Distribution of pediatric vaccinations started this week and will continue throughout the coming days. Parents and caretakers are encouraged to talk to their pediatrician or other healthcare provider about getting their children vaccinated. Parents and caretakers can visit our website for a list of vaccination providers <https://kernpublichealth.com/> or visit <https://MyTurn.ca.gov> to schedule an appointment.

Public Health will begin administering pediatric vaccinations as early as tomorrow, November 4, at the Kern County Fairgrounds vaccination clinic, as we await our shipment of doses. Walk-ups are welcome or schedule your appointment at <https://MyTurn.ca.gov>. Free flu shots are also available!

Learn more about vaccination for children ages 5-11 years by visiting CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/planning/children.html>