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NEWS RELEASE

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Kern County Public Health Announces Latest COVID-19 Facts

- There are 1,143 newly reported confirmed cases in Kern County bringing our total confirmed cases to date to 175,585.
- There are no new deaths being reported today and a total of 1,936 COVID-19 deaths since the start of the pandemic.
- The 7-day case rate is 58.6 per 100,000 (one week ago it was 15.2).
- As of January 9, 1,060,285 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered to Kern County residents. 449,994 or 52.6% of Kern's eligible population have been *fully* vaccinated against COVID-19.
- As of yesterday, Kern County has 199 COVID-19 related hospitalizations and 29 are in the ICU.

“Local COVID-19 related hospitalizations are increasing, but our ICU numbers are currently remaining relatively stable. We hope this is a sign that Omicron will cause less severe illness; however, hospitalizations typically trail increases in cases by a couple of weeks, so it is too early to know for sure,” says Brynn Carrigan, Director of Kern County Public Health.

Kern County Public Health continues to garner additional resources to ensure our pre-hospital and hospital systems remain available to serve our residents in need. Two state-staffed teams are currently in Kern that have expanded both regular and ICU hospital bed capacity, providing approximately 25 ICU beds and 15 med-surge beds to Kern's capacity. It is anticipated this staffing will remain through February, at which time needs will be reassessed. Additionally, Public Kern also has an ambulance strike team consisting of five ambulances with 10 crew members and a supervisor assisting with ambulance response to 9-1-1 calls through January 20, 2022. Finally, Public Health is working to bring three state-staffed strike teams consisting of twelve medical staff for each team assigned to the emergency department in three hospitals to assist with offloading patients from ambulances and patient care in the emergency room. These teams are expected to arrive this week and be in Kern through the end of March.

Kern continues to experience high volumes of 911 calls that are taxing our entire emergency response system. We urge our residents to use the emergency system responsibly and call 911 only in a true emergency such as a heart attack, stroke or other serious health condition.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) recently announced that emergency medical services workers to fall under the healthcare worker [Isolation and Quarantine guidance](#). This allows expedited return from isolation/quarantine during critical staffing shortages. Additionally, on Saturday, CDPH announced a temporary allowance for asymptomatic positive and exposed healthcare workers, including EMS workers to work while wearing an N95 respirator, due to extreme staffing shortages in these positions statewide.

On January 7, CDC recommended shortening the interval between initial series to booster for the Moderna vaccine from 6 months to 5 months. View CDC media [statement](#) to learn more.

“With this recent increase in COVID-19 cases in Kern County, and the presence of the highly transmissible Omicron variant, it is imperative that we use as many layers of protection to prevent the spread of this disease. Individuals with chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease or who are obese are at higher risk of severe complications from COVID-19,” says Carrigan. “Even if you do not have underlying chronic conditions, it is imperative that we all keep our bodies healthy and resilient by eating a healthy diet, getting plenty of rest, and exercising regularly.”

Additional layers of protection include:

- Getting vaccinated against COVID-19
- Getting your COVID-19 booster as soon as eligible
- Wearing a mask while in indoor public settings
- Staying home when sick or exposed to COVID-19
- Washing your hands often
- Get tested before gathering or traveling
- Gather outside or increase ventilation when indoors

Visit our website www.kernpublichealth.com for the latest information on COVID-19 in Kern County, which includes interactive maps of vaccination and testing locations.

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