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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Kern County Public Health Announces Latest COVID-19 Facts**

- There are 324 newly reported confirmed cases in Kern County bringing our total confirmed cases to date to 166,183.
- There are no new deaths being reported today and a total of 1,918 COVID-19 deaths since the start of the pandemic.
- The 7-day case rate is 15.2 per 100,000.
- As of January 2, 1,040,104 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered to Kern County residents. 446,071 or 52.2% of Kern's eligible population have been *fully* vaccinated against COVID-19.
- As of yesterday, Kern County has 108 COVID-19 related hospitalizations and 32 are in the ICU.

Public Health has received our first batch of confirmed cases of Omicron in Kern County as we report 10 new cases as of today. Omicron (B.1.1.529) is a new SARS-CoV-2 variant that was designated as a Variant of Concern by the WHO on November 26, 2021. California reported its first case of Omicron variant on December 1, 2021. As of December 29, 2021, 2,788 confirmed cases associated with the Omicron variant have been reported to the state. According to CDPH, early data regarding the Omicron variant suggest the increased transmissibility of the Omicron variant is two to four times as infectious as the Delta variant, and there is evidence of immune evasion. But there is still much to be learned about this variant. Therefore, it remains critically important that we use as many layers of protection to prevent the spread of COVID-19 which 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
- Washing your hands often
- Get tested before gathering or traveling
- Gather outside or increase ventilation when indoors
- Eating a well-balanced diet and exercising regularly

Yesterday, the FDA amended the emergency use authorization for the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to include the authorization of the booster dose in individuals 12 - 15 years of age, to shorten the time frame between completion of the primary vaccination and the booster dose from 6 months to 5 months, and to allow for a third dose for certain immunocompromised children 5 - 11 years old. This morning CDC recommended the Pfizer booster at five months post vaccination and the third dose for certain immunocompromised children 5 to 11 years old. The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices is scheduled to discuss the booster dose recommendation for 12-15-year-olds on January 5.

CDC media statement can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/s0104-Pfizer-Booster.html>

Visit our website [www.kernpublichealth.com](http://www.kernpublichealth.com) for the latest information on COVID-19 in Kern County.