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To promote and protect the health and well-being of Kings County residents through education, prevention, and intervention.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UPCOMING HOLIDAY SEASON – COVID-19/ Influenza (Flu)/ Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Infections

HANFORD – The Kings County Department of Public Health (KCDPH) is encouraging the community to prepare appropriately for the Holiday Season as Influenza (Flu), Respiratory Syncytial Virus Infection (RSV) and COVID-19 activity is remaining elevated in California. According to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), overall flu and RSV infections are higher than usual for this time of the year throughout the State. Now is the best time to get your flu shot to protect yourselves, your family and to reduce the strain to our healthcare system. "As we prepare for holiday gatherings, we need to continue being vigilant in preventing the rapid spread of winter viruses," said Heather Silva, Assistant Director of KCDPH.

Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) surveillance has seen an increase in RSV in emergency department visits and hospitalizations in multiple regions in the United States. RSV infection can cause a variety of respiratory illnesses in infants and young children. RSV can vary from a cold-like illness but can also cause lower respiratory infections like bronchiolitis and pneumonia. The CDC states that 1-2% of children younger than 6 months of age with RSV infection may need to be hospitalized. Severe disease most commonly occurs in young infants and children with any of the following underlying high-risk conditions:

- Premature infants
- Infants, especially those 6 months and younger
- Children younger than 2 years old with chronic lung disease or congenital heart disease
- Children with suppressed immune systems
- Children who have neuromuscular disorders, including those who have difficulty swallowing or clearing mucus secretions

At the same time, we should not let our guard down with COVID-19 infections. As of September 2, 2022, the updated bivalent booster has been available to those who have completed a primary series of the COVID-19 vaccine. The KCDPH recommends that everyone who is eligible, ages 6 months and older stay up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines. The updated bivalent booster that provides protection for the Omicron variant BA.4 and BA.5 with additionally providing protection to new circulating variants that may be prominent in the upcoming months.

Additional information may be found at: www.kcdph.com