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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **MERCED COUNTY MOVES INTO RED TIER FOLLOWING ADJUDICATION WITH STATE**

MERCED COUNTY, CA—Today, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) confirmed that Merced County is now in the less-restrictive red tier of its “Blueprint for a Safer Economy.”

The tier change is effective immediately and is the result of an adjudication the Merced County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) filed with the State last week petitioning to move into the red tier from the most-restrictive purple tier.

While the County had maintained red tier numbers for an appropriate amount of time to move into the State’s less-restrictive red tier, a sudden data dump of positive cases caused by delayed reporting from a laboratory artificially spiked the County’s numbers just prior to moving into the red tier two weeks ago. The data dump was processed as one day’s worth of cases instead of being spread out over more than two weeks.

“Throughout this pandemic, equity has remained a top priority for the Public Health Department,” said Dr. Rebecca Nanyonjo-Kemp, Director of Public Health. “Remaining in the purple tier yet another week was not an option and we are pleased that the adjudication request was approved by the State. That doesn’t change the need to increase the number of people vaccinated because the sooner we reach herd immunity, the faster we’re able to put COVID-19 in the rearview mirror.”

Through the adjudication process, CDPH recognized the issue and re-processed the data, which reflected that Merced County should be in the red tier.

“We appreciate the State recognizing this issue and making the change,” said Chairman Daron McDaniel of the Merced County Board of Supervisors. “I would like to thank County staff for identifying this data error and addressing it with the State—being placed in the wrong tier is a disservice to our business community and we owe it to them to get it right.”

The red tier allows for the re-opening of more non-essential business operations. Learn more [here](#).

As of today, Merced County case data shows 8.2 daily cases per 100,000 residents (qualifies for red tier) and a 4 percent positivity rate (qualifies for orange tier). According to [State criteria](#), the case rate, test positivity, and health equity metric thresholds must all be met to move into a less restrictive tier. Counties must remain in a tier for at least 3 weeks before moving to a less restrictive tier. Counties must meet the next tier’s criteria for two consecutive weeks to move to a less restrictive tier.

Furthermore, on June 15, California will fully reopen the economy if there is enough vaccine supply for Californians 16 years and older to be vaccinated and hospitalization rates remain stable and low.

Moving forward, more information regarding Merced County’s tier status will be provided as it becomes available. As a reminder, residents are encouraged to sign up to receive vaccination at [MyTurn.ca.gov](http://MyTurn.ca.gov).

For more information regarding COVID-19 vaccines in Merced County: [www.countyofmerced.com/vaccines](http://www.countyofmerced.com/vaccines).