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Amid Omicron Variant Surge, California Children's Hospital Association Urges Families to Fully Vaccinate Eligible Children, Adults Against COVID-19

Sacramento, CA – With the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) releasing updated data showing a nearly 100% increase in new pediatric hospital admissions from the previous week, the California Children's Hospital Association (CCHA) is urging families to fully vaccinate all eligible children and adults against COVID-19.

"California's children's hospitals are designed to care for some of the state's most vulnerable children, whether they're suffering from respiratory viruses, asthma attacks or cancer, and we perform everything from routine procedures to pediatric organ transplants and cardiac surgery," said CCHA President and CEO Ann-Louise Kuhns. "Unfortunately, like hospitals across the country, the surge in COVID-19 cases caused by the Omicron variant is straining our hospitals not only because we have more highly infectious COVID-19 patients to treat – but also because we have fewer staff, nurses and doctors available to care for these children."

Dr. Patrick Frias, Chair of the CCHA Board and President and CEO of Rady Children's Hospital San Diego noted that COVID-19 can cause significant health issues for children: "At Rady Children's Hospital, the number of hospitalizations of children with COVID-19 more than tripled in the last week alone; 25% of them are children who have no underlying conditions. We also know children who contract COVID-19 can be at risk of developing a rare condition – multi-organ inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C) – that can cause prolonged fever, inflammation in the body, and can affect one or more organ systems. Based on our experience with the last surge, we expect to see even more MIS-C cases with this current surge.

"The best way to protect children from these outcomes is to get them fully vaccinated. COVID-19 vaccinations are safe and effective for adults and children five years and older, and boosters for children 12 years and older have just been approved by both the FDA and CDC. Getting vaccinated today is a tangible way for parents to have greater peace of mind about their children's wellbeing and for all Californians to help slow the spread of COVID-19 so adults can go back to work, and kids can stay in school and live their safest, healthiest lives."

To date, 72.5% of children ages 5 to 11 and 27.3% of children ages 12 to 17 remain unvaccinated. Since the start of the pandemic, more than 826,000 children in California have been infected with COVID-19. To learn more about getting vaccinated against COVID-19, talk to your doctor or visit healthychildren.org.