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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: October 5, 2020

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator 

Re: **COVID-19 Pandemic Update #11**

## Monthly COVID-19 Infections

We now have seven full months of data on the number of COVID-19 infections and overall the trends continue to demonstrate improvement. (Summarized in Attachment 1.) We also now have indications that the spike of cases associated with the return of students to the University peaked during week 38 (9/13 - 9/19) and is now improving, thanks in part to the aggressive mitigation efforts of the County and the University of Arizona. Likewise, we now feel more comfortable that the improvements in terms of mortality and hospitalizations continue to steadily trend down, and appear to not be impacted by the spike.

The table below provides the number of infections per month by date of report by the State and by date of test collection, with the latest month closing on September 30, 2020.

Monthly COVID-19 Cases in Pima County as Reported by ADHS		
	By Date Reported	By Collection Date
March	153	318
April	1,024	1,089
May	1,101	1,534
June	5,622	7,554
July	7,780	8,307
August	4,746	3,194
September	4,342	3,817

Over 260,000 COVID-19 tests have been collected and processed for Pima County residents since the beginning of the pandemic (just under 15 percent of all the testing conducted in Arizona). To date Pima County Health Department and its contractors have been responsible for more than 90,452 of the tests performed in this jurisdiction. At this time, we estimate that more than 20 percent of Pima County's population has been tested. Pima County daily test counts ranging from a low of 469 to a high of 2,269.

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As of the end of September the total number of deaths stands at 620 in Pima County and has not increased in the last week.

### **Weekly and Geographic Location of COVID-19 Infections**

In the last update I provided the Board with maps showing the geographic distribution of COVID-19 cases in Pima County as well as the number of actual cases during any particular week. This information is produced on a weekly basis.

Attached are four geographic locational maps for four weeks in September. These maps allow us to better understand the dynamic location shift of infections occurring within the region. (Attachment 2) The latest map was produced on October 5, 2020. These four maps demonstrate the dramatic shift of COVID-19 infections to the University of Arizona (UA) area. For the week with the largest number of increased cases of 961, September 13 to September 19, 687 of those cases were in the UA study area and represents 71 percent of the total number of weekly infections. (Attachment 3) These infections at the UA study area have ameliorated in the week of September 20 to September 26, decreasing to 207 cases out of the 438 new COVID-19 infections or 47 percent of total regional infections. For the week of September 26 to October 2, the number of Countywide COVID-19 infections decreased to 334 and the number in the University study area decreased to 76. This decrease is representative of infection control practices that can significantly reduce the spread of COVID-19.

As the Board recalls, during the previous week of September 13 through September 19, the Pima County public health agency issued a voluntary stay at home recommendation for the UA area bounded by 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Campbell Avenue, Helen Street and 10<sup>th</sup> Street. In addition, the County suspended pool permits and directed the closure of gyms and common areas in off-campus student apartments and other housing. These actions along with the enforcement actions of the UA are credited with the drop in caseload count at the UA.

### **New Public Facing Data Dashboard**

Due to continued keen interest in the dynamics of the pandemic, and in order to provide transparency to the public regarding COVID-19 infections and deaths and how these are evolving in the region, the County will today activate a new COVID-19 webpage. This webpage displays COVID-19 cases and deaths by age-group, sex and ethnicity. The interactive dashboard map permits users to drill down by geographic location including specific city/town, census tract, zip code, and school district.

This interactive web-based tool will provide additional information and transparency regarding the COVID-19 pandemic to the public. Additional efforts are under way to explore how we may make some limited data set available for public use. We balance these efforts with the obligation to protect the privacy of individuals because it is critical to not create disincentives to participate in the case investigation and contact tracing efforts, and because we are committed to prevent retaliation and stigma for those impacted by this pandemic.

**Greek, Sorority and Fraternity Housing**

With the initial outbreak of COVID-19 infections at the UA, the public health agency stood up a mobile testing unit that began testing in Greek, sorority and fraternity housing. This testing occurred in early September and continues to date. Attachment 4 shows the significant, concerning trend associated with substantially rising COVID-19 positivity rates in Greek testing trends. Of more concern is the fact that several Greek houses recently cancelled scheduled mobile testing events. I expressed our concern to the UA President in a September 29, 2020 letter. (Attachment 5)

The University’s strategy to test dorm residents upon their arrival initially ensured that that this group was not infected. Subsequent contact tracing efforts have linked many of the individuals in the dormitory clusters to a variety social interactions outside the residential setting and associated with fraternity/sorority life as well as the student high-rise apartments immediately adjacent to campus.

Pima County continues to invest resources in providing mobile test sites to serve off-campus students and the surrounding neighboring communities. Mobile testing efforts are summarized in the table below.

Location	Address	Date	Times
University Boulevard	825 E University Blvd #101	10/2/2020	7PM-10PM
Kappa Alpha Order	906 N. First Ave.	10/3/2020	12PM-1PM
University Boulevard	825 E University Blvd #101	10/3/2020	7PM-10PM

Pima County continues to closely monitor these locations for COVID-19 outbreaks and have suggested to the UA President more stringent actions such as suspensions of charters for fraternal organizations and/or expulsion of students who do not comply with quarantine requirements if they are infected.

**Fixed Location Testing**

The County and its partners and contractors now to operate 5 fixed sites offering free low barrier COVID-19 testing. These are the Kino Event Center, Udall Recreation Center, Ellie Towne Flowing Wells Community Center and more recently El Pueblo Community Center and the Congress Street Parking Structure. Per week testing volume and percent positivity are summarized in the table below. Trends in the overall volume of tests performed continues to be robust, with the highest rates of positive tests at the Kino Event Center.

	Sept 4 – Sept 10	Sept 11 – Sept 17	Sept 18 – Sept 24	Sept 25 –Oct 1
Kino	257 (19%)	1,203 (7%)	566 (13%)	346 (15%)
Ellie Towne	382 (3%)	596 (4%)	441 (3%)	271 (4%)
Udall	719 (6%)	972 (6%)	775 (2%)	636 (4%)
El Pueblo	N/A	106 (9%)	153 (5%)	246 (9%)
Congress St	N/A	26 (0%)	34 (0%)	44 (0%)

**Mobile Testing Targeting Vulnerable Communities**

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all of Pima County but has been particularly devastating for low-income people and communities of color. The Health Department was recently awarded \$900,000 to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in vulnerable populations in collaboration with community partners. The three component approach includes 1) Mobile Testing, 2) Care Coordination and 3) Education. The overall goal of this effort is not simply to deliver testing but also to fill the information and services gap that are common in these communities.

The initial effort was focused on ten local church communities as trusted sources of information and support to vulnerable people. Through that effort, testing events were held in conjunction with multiple churches and delivering 408 tests. The positivity rate in these settings was low (2 percent). This experience has served to inform the way these and future services are structured and how community partners are engaged to continue to deliver this type of support over the next year.

This current strategy has been expanded beyond faith organizations to include other trusted community partners. Under this plan the Health Department has conducted 8 mobile testing events in neighborhoods identified by community organizations, but focusing on areas with high rates of poverty and elevated COVID-19 infection rates. This effort has now served over 309 people and has yielded a slightly higher positivity rate of 3 percent, suggesting perhaps better targeting of a higher risk population.

The table below summarizes the mobile testing efforts with vulnerable populations as well as planned testing sites for this week. These sites are designed to provide low-barrier access that includes on-site assistance and registration.

Date	Location	Address	Number Tested	Phase
7/25/2020	St. Johns Church	602 W Ajo Way	68	PILOT
8/1/2020	Our Mother of Sorrows	1800 S. Kolb Rd	89	
8/5/2020	Pima County Interfaith Council	3200 N. Los Altos Ave	43	
8/5/2020	Sacred Heart	602 W Ajo Way	31	
8/8/2020	Sacred Heart	601 E. Ft. Lowell Rd	39	
8/8/2020	St John Church	602 W Ajo Way	6	
8/15/2020	Margaret Mary Catholic	801 N. Grande Ave	41	
8/22/2020	St. Marks Presbyterian	3809 E. 3rd St	39	
8/29/2020	St. Phillips Episcopal	4440 N. Campbell Ave	21	
8/29/2020	St. Pius X Catholic Church	1800 N. Cam Pio Decimo	31	
9/2/2020	Santa Cruz Lutheran	6809 S. Cardinal Ave	22	COMPLETED
9/3/2020	Mexican Consulate	3915 E. Broadway Blvd	45	
9/13/2020	St. Monica Church	212 W. Medina Rd	53	
9/18/2020	Fred Archer Neighborhood Center	1665 S. La Cholla Blvd	9	
9/19/2020	The Garden Kitchen	2205 S. 4th Ave	68	
9/26/2020	Cardenas Supermarket	902 W. Irvington Rd	48	
9/27/2020	Dunbar Pavillion	325 W. 2nd St	64	PLANNED
10/2/2020	Quincie Douglas	1575 E. 36th St.	(75)	
10/3/2020	Grace Temple Baptist Church	1019 E. 31st St.	(75)	
10/10/2020	YWCA Bonita location	Bonita Ave	(75)	
10/17/2020	Rising Star Church	2800 E 36th St	(75)	
10/24/2020	Friendship Missionary Baptist Church	850 N. 11th Ave	(75)	
10/27/2020	St. John's Church	602 W Ajo Way	(75)	

Similar efforts focusing on rural and remote communities in collaboration with DEMA have resulted in the delivery of mobile testing to the communities as far flung as Ajo, Green Valley, Catalina, Vail, as well as the Rillito, Sunnyside High School and the Rodeo Grounds. These efforts delivered 2,311 tests with a similarly low positivity rate of 1.2 percent.

**Case Investigation and Contact Tracing**

A major tool used by the Health Department to slow the spread of COVID-19 is case investigation and contact tracing. The performance of this approach is monitored using Public Health Tracking and Prevention metrics. From August 9, 2020 through August 22, 2020, 31 percent of COVID-19 cases had an initial case investigation (interview) completed within 48 hours of public health notification. Currently, 51 percent of cases have their initial assessment completed within 48 hours from September 6, 2020 through September 19,

2020, showing a significant increase in our ability to conduct case investigations in a timely manner. In addition, field staff are being deployed by Maximus into the community beginning on October 5, 2020 to increase outreach to COVID-19 cases that we have been unable to contact. These field investigators also provide education and COVID-19 support kits to contacted cases with COVID-19. Approximately 53 percent of identified contacts to cases are reached at the current time. We recommend 100 percent of those contacts to get tested for COVID-19.

In addition to referral for testing or care, our case investigation and contact tracing efforts have connected 1,239 individuals with resources including home-delivered food boxes, housing/shelters, mental health (including counseling), employer notes, medication assistance, chronic disease services, childcare information, cleaning and household supplies, PPE, financial assistance (including rent, utilities, phone bills), health insurance and benefit enrollment, transportation, legal services, and social networking opportunities.

#### **County Facility Wellness Checks**

The County continues to provide daily wellness checks at all County public buildings to protect the health and safety of our employees. During the week of September 19 to September 25, 31,326 wellness checks were conducted. Of those, five were reported above the body temperature threshold and were denied access to the County building to which they were seeking entry. All those denied access were members of the public seeking entry at the Adult Probation West Office and Oro Valley Library and Woods Libraries.

Over 540,000 temperature checks have been conducted since this program began with 135 persons denied access due to high temperatures. Only six of these were County employees.

#### **Influenza and COVID-19 Testing Sites**

Reducing influenza infections decreases the burden on the healthcare system during the pandemic. On-site vaccination clinics providing both influenza and general childhood vaccinations have been discussed with public schools. Eleven school districts have expressed interest in mobile vaccine clinics and are being scheduled for the month of October.

Community-based flu vaccination has been greatly expanded through partner contractors. This partnership allows the Health Department to direct no-cost, mobile flu vaccine services to populations and sites deemed high-risk. Examples of groups identified to receive mobile vaccine services include long-term care and assisted living residents, people experiencing homelessness, tribal members and people living in congregate settings. These services have also been paired with mobile COVID-19 test sites provided by the Health Department so community members can be vaccinated for flu and be tested for COVID-19 at a single location.

The Health Department Immunization Program has also coordinated with Federally Qualified Health Care (FQHC) partners to ensure additional Vaccine-for-Adults sufficient influenza vaccine doses are ordered and utilized throughout the community. A comprehensive and educational influenza awareness media campaign promoting the safety and efficacy of flu vaccine through radio ads, bus benches, flyers and social media is in development.

### **Schools**

The County Health Department continues to work closely with the County schools and public school districts to provide support and updated information. We continue to conduct two weekly webinars for Public, Private and Charter Schools as well as public schools. The webinars provide training and guidance on local, state, and federal recommendations for hybrid and/or in-person learning. Attendance averages over 150 per week. The Health Department has also developed and implemented a more streamlined COVID-19 reporting process for schools, whereby school staff can report positive case(s) via a form on a website. A HIPAA compliant survey is then e-mailed to them gather information on the cases and their close contacts so contract tracing can be conducted.

Six trainings were held for administrators/staff of Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) about how to report positive cases to the Health Department, Sunnyside, Marana, Diocese of Tucson and Amphi have also been trained for a total of over 200 school employees. Health Department staff has also attended six school board meetings, including TUSD, Sunnyside, Catalina foothills, Marana, Tanque Verde, Diocese of Tucson as well as providing an additional update to Arizona Educators Association.

Since August, a total of 74 school-related cases (faculty, staff and students) were reported successfully using this process, and the average time to initiation of the case interview is an impressive eight hours.

### **Events Involving 50 or More Persons**

Arizona Executive Order 2020-43, *Slowing the Spread of COVID-19*, prohibits organized public events of more than fifty (50) people unless the event has been approved by city, town or county in unincorporated areas, and only if adequate safety measures are implemented. Additionally, other event operators within incorporated jurisdictions have sought the formal input and assessment of the Health Department as they attempt to conduct safe and successful events. In order to properly review special event requests, detailed mitigation measures are needed to help ensure the safety of all in attendance.

An application and review process for such requests has been formalized and streamlined in response to a significant increase in the number of events requests. The process requires an event organizer to submit an *Application for Special/Temporary Events of 50 or More Persons During Pandemic*, along with the event's mitigation plan for review by the Health Department. Submission must occur at least fourteen (14) days prior to the event. This new review process goes into effect this week.

### **Logistics**

The County continues to provide personal protective equipment, hand sanitizer, masks, gloves, face shields and other equipment designed to protect individuals from COVID-19. We are continuing to acquire supplies, including KN95 masks, N95 masks, surgical masks, gloves and other essential equipment.

We are now making available over 200,000 cloth masks for distribution to students in various school districts beginning the week of October 5, 2020. As school districts begin to prepare for hybrid instruction, it is essential that the distribution of cloth masks be made to school districts which will provide students a face mask for those who do not have a face mask.

### **Travel Restrictions**

I recently indicated that if County employees had traveled out of the Country to locations deemed to be high-risk for COVID-19 infection rates, that the employee, upon return, be required to quarantine and use their accumulated leave time. This is particularly important due to Pima County's proximity to Mexico, in particular Sonora. Although there is an essential travel prohibition at the Border between the United States and Mexico, it is still possible for individuals to travel to Mexico's vacation locations such as San Carlos and Puerto Peñasco. If employees choose to travel to these locations, they will be required to quarantine upon return. This action is an additional step to further safeguard the workplace for our employees. (Attachment 6)

### **County Mask Resolution**

We will continue to advise individuals, businesses and jurisdictions that Pima County's mask resolution has Countywide applicability.

Recent news articles from Maricopa County, report cities such as Scottsdale rescinding their mask requirement has caused some confusion. The Maricopa County mask requirement remains in place and is applicable to Scottsdale residents. The same is true for the Pima County mask resolution and its Countywide applicability. This means it applies everywhere in Pima County.

CHH/anc

### **Attachments**

- c: Jan Leshner, Chief Deputy County Administrator  
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,  
Health and Community Services  
Terry Cullen, MD, MS, Public Health Director, Pima County Health Department