



MEMORANDUM

Date: December 17, 2021

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

From: Jan Leshner 
Acting County Administrator

Re: **Why Mandated Vaccination Still Makes Sense**

The Board is often asked to make difficult decisions governing how we interact with each other during this pandemic. As new strains of Sars-CoV-2 present themselves or some people become infected even though they are vaccinated, it can raise questions about why people should follow public-health advice and get vaccinated. The public regularly questions national, state and local leaders about the technology and science upon which we develop and make recommendations. It is incumbent we help them understand why their government leaders have taken certain actions during the pandemic.

Even though Gov. Doug Ducey in his latest executive order ([EO-2021-21](#)) is seeking to prevent local governments from requiring vaccinations of employees or the public, there are numerous reasons Pima County should continue to require new County employees and County employees who work with vulnerable populations to be vaccinated.

Although science has evolved tremendously over the past two years, certain facts are increasingly well established:

- Unvaccinated people have a greater risk of infection, hospitalization and death from COVID-19 compared to the fully vaccinated. ([CDC](#))
- Compared to natural infection, vaccination provides a higher, more robust, and more consistent level of immunity to protect people from hospitalization and the severe consequences of COVID-19 infection. ([New CDC Study: Vaccination Offers Higher Protection than Previous COVID-19 Infection](#))
- Even in a home setting where interpersonal contact is most intense, transmission decreases by nearly 50% in households when a case is fully vaccinated compared to an unvaccinated case. (Effect of Vaccination on Household Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in England, [New England Journal of Medicine](#), 6/23/21)
- Despite the emergence of new variants, fully immunized individuals who subsequently contract COVID appear to be less likely to infect others by reducing viral production and its duration in the body. (COVID vaccines cut the risk of transmitting Delta, [Nature](#), 10/5/21)

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You can boil this all down to simply this: vaccinated people are less likely to contract COVID, and if they do, are less likely to spread it or get seriously ill; unvaccinated people are more likely to contract COVID, and if they do, are more likely to spread it to others.

Pima County has a public health responsibility to take those actions necessary to decrease the impact and duration of the pandemic. At the very least, as public servants, we have a legal responsibility not to increase the damage and death that COVID is already causing in this community. We are duty bound to protect both our employees and the public. Vaccination requirement for new employees and for those who work with vulnerable populations accomplishes this goal while supporting a safer environment for all of us.

Taking all of this into consideration, I recommend the Board continue to aggressively support vaccination of the public and of County employees as the best policy to protect its workforce and to slow and halt the spread of COVID-19 and the suffering and death and devastation it has caused in our County over the past two years.

JL/anc

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,
Health and Community Services
Cathy Bohland, Director, Human Resources
Terry Cullen, MD, MS, Public Health Director, Pima County Health Department