



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

PIMA COUNTY GOVERNMENTAL CENTER
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C.H. HUCKELBERRY
County Administrator

March 3, 2021

Dr. Cara Christ, M.D., M.S.
Arizona Department of Health Services
150 N. 18th Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

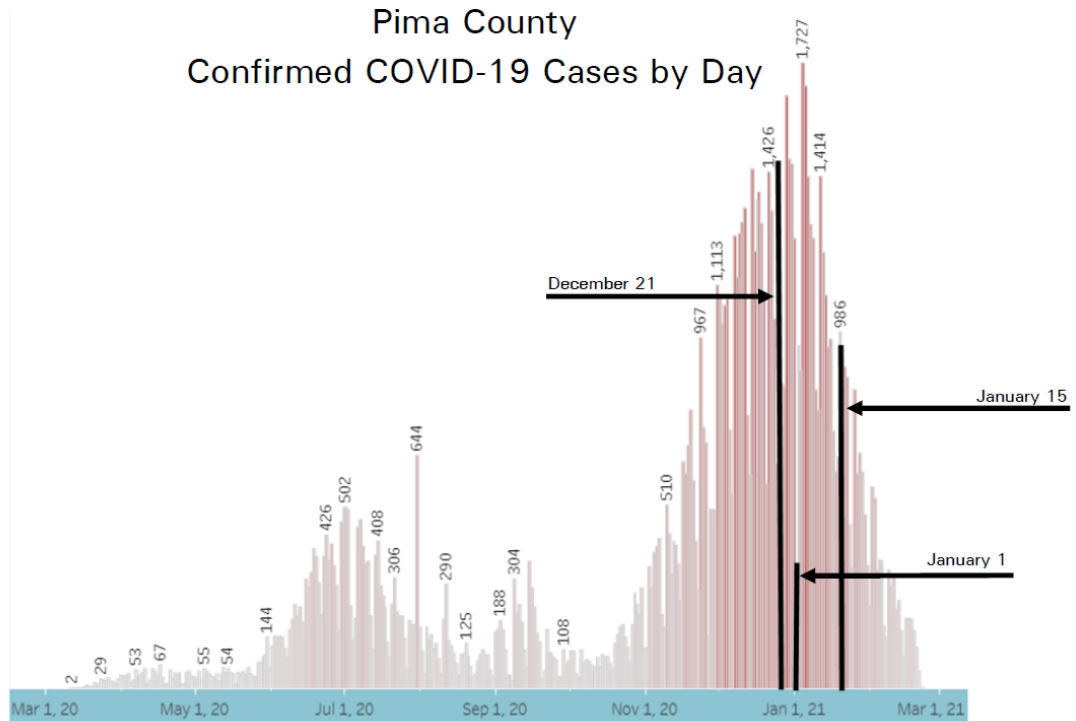
Re: Pima County Allocated Funding for COVID-19 Testing

Dear Dr. Christ:

The Pima County Board of Supervisors at their public session on March 2, 2021 requested that I ask you to reconsider or clarify funding to be provided for the continuation of COVID-19 testing.

We appreciate the initial allocation of \$14.3 million. It is inadequate to meet our financial obligations associated with COVID-19 testing. Pima County exhausted our initial allocation of the Coronavirus Relief Funds on or before December 21, 2020. The pandemic did not end on this date and we continued, on a daily basis, to incur testing costs. These costs are now being charged to our General Fund, something that is not sustainable. We felt this was necessary to meet our public health responsibility in responding to the pandemic.

As you know, the Coronavirus pandemic accelerated through December 2020 and into January 2021. Below is a graph demonstrating the daily recorded COVID-19 infections in Pima County based on the State's website. The data clearly reflects the extent of the pandemic infection in Pima County during this time. The peak infection day was January 4, 2021 with 1,727 infections. During this period of December 21 through February 19 there were 43,777 COVID-19 cases in Pima County and Pima County performed 85,955 tests costing \$12.9 million. As you can see the \$14.3 million allocation will not go beyond March 16 or earlier.



Reporting Period and Confirmed COVID-19 Cases

December 21, 2020 to December 31, 2021	12,012
January 1, 2021 to January 14, 2021	15,687
January 15, 2021 to Present	16,078
Total	43,777

Source - Arizona Department of Health Services updated on 02/23/2021

Clearly, the peak period of infection for the entire pandemic period occurred in December 2020 and January 2021. We felt it was absolutely necessary to continue ongoing COVID-19 testing.

As you know, Pima County has been the most proactive County in Arizona in response to the Coronavirus testing during the pandemic. Our County testing investment has surpassed that of any other county. You will not find any other county providing more funding in support of COVID-19 testing. Over time Pima County government has provided at least half or more of the total amount of testing in Pima County, this simply means our local public health agency has borne this expense, again, more than any other county.

During the height of the pandemic infection period, the County continued to provide COVID-19 testing as a reasonable and necessary response by our public health agency even though we had exhausted our Coronavirus Relief Funds.

Dr. Cara Christ, M.D., M.S.

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Listed below are the COVID-19 tests that were completed by Pima County during these peak infection months, and their cost. Since we have heard confusion about the time period we could be paid for our continuing testing costs, below are three periods for critical County testing volumes and related costs.

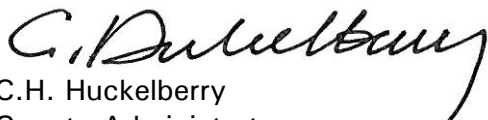
Period	County COVID-19 Tests	County's Cost
December 21 to December 31, 2020	23,678	\$3.5 million
January 1 to January 15, 2021	27,496	\$4.1 million
January 15 to February 19, 2021	34,781	\$5.2 million

Even today as the infection rate decreases, continuation of COVID-19 testing is critical to our public health response. In fact, it is even more critical now than ever as we are in the downward curve of infections and we need to quickly identify and isolate both symptomatic and asymptomatic carriers.

We believe the funding provided to the State by the federal government through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 clearly covers all of our test expenses. It would seem reasonable that federal funds provided to the State should be spent for this purpose since controlling the pandemic and appropriately managing it depends fundamentally on testing, contact tracing and isolation.

Our Board would appreciate an expeditious response to our request since they will consider discontinuing COVID-19 testing on March 16, 2021. Without the federal funding provided for this purpose, we alone do not have the financial capability to continue testing after that date. We need the assistance of the State in this matter and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

- c: The Honorable Douglas Ducey, Governor, State of Arizona
The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors
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