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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: October 7, 2021

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

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator *CH*

Re: **Asylum Seekers and the Potential to Spread COVID-19 to the General Community**

There continues to be discussion among the Board of Supervisors regarding asylum seekers and the potential to spread COVID-19 to the general community. As reported to the Board at your recent Board meeting, these concerns are factually and statistically unfounded.

It is a fact that the daily releases from US Customs and Border Protection or immigration officials and the Border Patrol are increasing and have for the last 10 days been averaging in excess of 150 individuals each day. These are family units, many with children. They are closely monitored as well as tested for COVID-19 and many of these individuals are in the care of Casa Alitas for less than 24 hours. For those here less than 24 hours, the County has chosen not to offer COVID-19 vaccination to those individuals. Further, many of the individuals at this point have already been vaccinated for COVID-19. Those who are eligible choose to be vaccinated, particularly based on recent federal requirements requiring vaccination post-October 1, 2021.

Therefore, there should be little if any concern over asylum seekers causing community outbreaks of COVID-19. Such would be the case if the County provided no temporary or emergency shelter for these individuals as they would simply be released to the streets to find their own way to sponsors in the United States.

The present response by Pima County and our partner, Catholic Community Services, is the most appropriate response. This planned response ensures community public safety and health as well as protects those seeking asylum from potential risks associated with the lack of food and shelter during the transitional period to their place of residence in the United States to receive an appropriate asylum hearing and proceeding before the courts.

The response of the County has been appropriate, reasonable, humane and on the side of maximizing community and public health.

c: Jan Leshar, 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  
Marguerite (Peg) Harmon, Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Community Services of  
Southern Arizona  
Teresa Cavendish, Director of Operations, Catholic Community Services of Southern  
Arizona  
Diego Pina Lopez, Director of Shelter Operations, Catholic Community Services of  
Southern Arizona