



MEMORANDUM

Date: February 28, 2022

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

From: Jan Leshner 
Acting County Administrator

Re: **Pandemic Update**

The Omicron surge continues to recede in Pima County. Cases peaked at a historic high of 17,907 cases the week of January 9, 2022. This compares to 2,225 cases last week and during our low-point of 243 cases the first week of June 2021. (Attachment 1) At this time the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is reporting a case rate of 170 per 100,000 for the last seven days.

The peak hospitalizations of Pima County residents appears to have occurred the third week of January 2022 at 307, and was reported at 117 for the second week in February 2022. This is still significantly higher than a low point of 15 during the last week of May 2021.

Diagnostic COVID-19 testing in Pima County, which peaked at the historic level of 79,514 the week of January 9, 2022 dropped to 28,103 last week. A total of 110,504 tests were performed in February 2022. Positivity peaked at about 28 percent the week of January 16 and has now dropped to 11 percent last week. Please note this is not inclusive of the tens of thousands of self-administered rapid antigen tests distributed by Pima County and hundreds of thousands distributed directly by the federal government.

Schools

Since the beginning of the school year, 330 schools have reported 23,404 cases. Case numbers have been decreasing each week from a high of 4,436 cases the second week of January 2022 to 711 in mid-February. This school year, schools have experienced 373 outbreaks and 196 recommended classroom closures. Students make up 85.2 percent of cases and teachers and staff are 14.8 percent. Children up to 11 years of age represented 44.2 percent (10,337 cases) of school reported cases, while the 12 to 19-year age group made up 38.6 percent (9,029 cases). (Attachment 2)

Vaccination

More than 1,775,007 doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in Pima County. At this time 67.4 percent (or 705,958 individuals) of the population of this County is fully vaccinated (with two doses of Moderna/Pfizer or a single dose of Johnson & Johnson). Notably, 71.3 percent of the vaccine age eligible population (5 years and older) is now fully

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vaccinated. Additionally, 303,966 or 44.6 percent of the fully vaccinated population has received a booster dose.

In total we have documented 50,963 breakthrough infections following complete vaccination. This is 7.6 percent of the fully vaccinated population that have developed subsequent COVID-19 infection. Breakthrough cases tend to result in less severe disease. For this reason, 0.14 percent (962) of fully vaccinated individuals have required hospitalization, and only 0.03 percent (220) have died of COVID-19 related illness.

Therapeutics

Monoclonal Antibody (mAb) therapy availability has been improving steadily across Pima County. This was significantly improved with the addition of resources and staffing provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Through this effort 404 doses of REGEN were delivered over 14 days in partnership with St. Mary's and St. Joseph's hospitals. Beginning on March 1, again in cooperation with St. Joseph's Hospital, 7 FEMA personnel will deploy to deliver new mAb intravenous therapy at San Rafael Clinic in southeast Pima County. Details are provided in the attached memorandum from Dr. Cullen. (Attachment 3)

Updated CDC Guidance

Late Friday afternoon, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a new and updated set of metrics that are meant to inform the way communities mitigate COVID-19 risk as we move into the endemic phase. This information is referenced [here](#). The new COVID-19 Community Levels are based on the 7-day average of three specific metrics: the number of cases per 100,000 people (i.e. <200 or \geq 200); new COVID-19 admissions per 100,000; and the percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients. Counties are divided into a Low, Medium or High COVID-19 Community Level. Mitigation measures are recommended based on the Community Level.

Applying this schema to Pima County, at the time of CDC's release: new cases are at 238 per 100,000; new COVID-19 admissions are 16.3 per 100,000, and staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 are 10.9 percent. This puts Pima County at a High (or Orange) Level. The individual and household prevention measures that are recommended at this High Level include: 1) mask use for all in indoor public spaces; 2) individuals who are immuneocompromised or at high risk for severe disease are advised to wear a respirator or high-quality mask, avoid non-essential indoor activity, access to rapid testing and antiviral therapies; and 3) mask use and testing for household contacts of high-risk individuals.

We fully anticipate that the Level for Pima County will continue to decrease significantly over the next month, and perhaps as early as the end of this week, but it is impossible to determine when exactly that will occur.

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Conclusion

As we move into a more chronic endemic phase, it is clear that we need to continue to develop a flexible approach to how we mitigate against community transmission while allowing greater degrees of social, educational and economic activity. Even in this environment the most important tools to protect ourselves and our community have not changed. Vaccination (and boosters), staying home when sick, masking for the protection of vulnerable populations, are important evidence-based interventions that will continue to protect our community.

JL/dym

Attachments

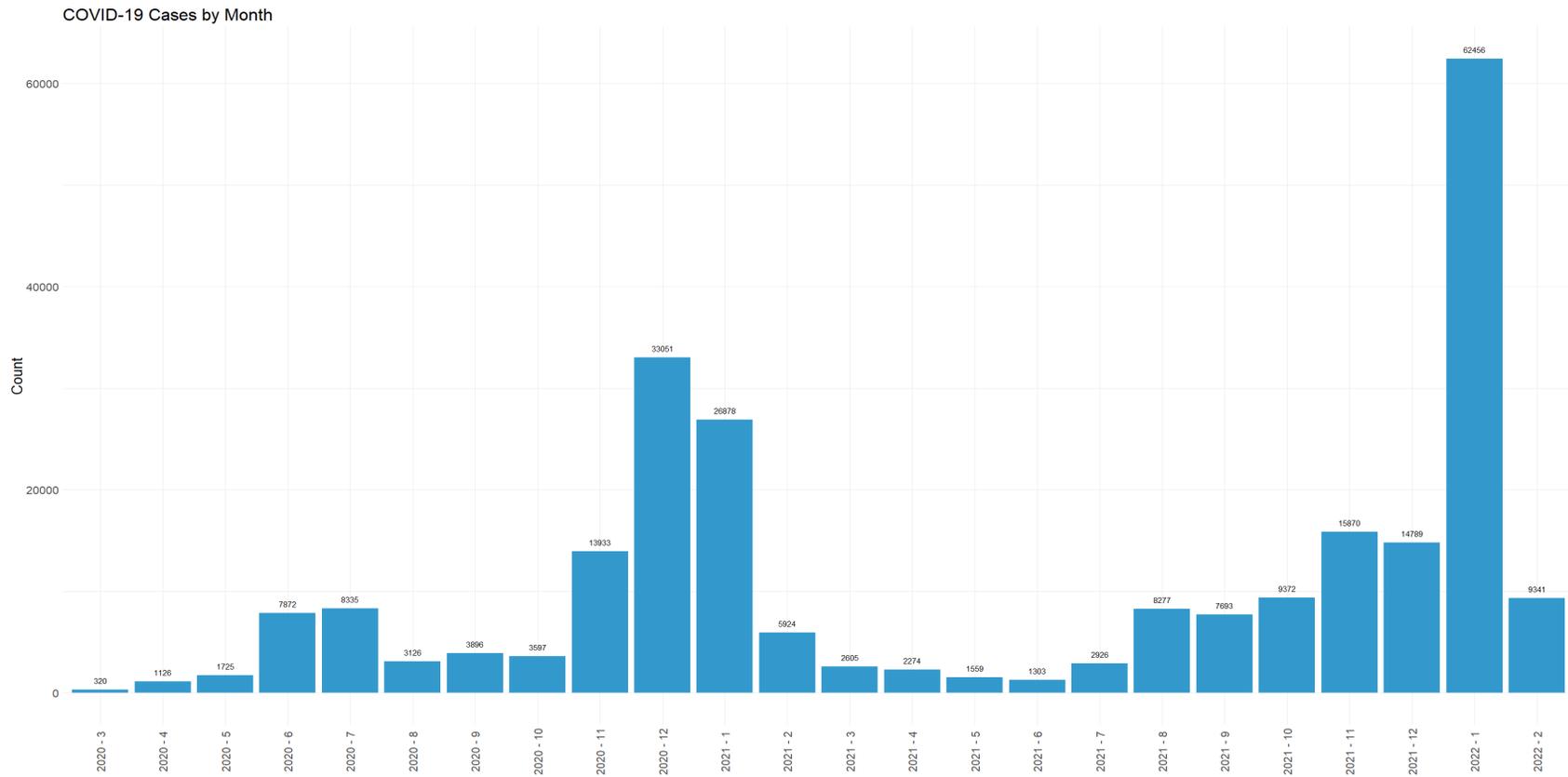
- c: Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator for Health and Community Services & Chief Medical Officer
- Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
- Terry Cullen, MD, MS, Public Health Director, Pima County Health Department

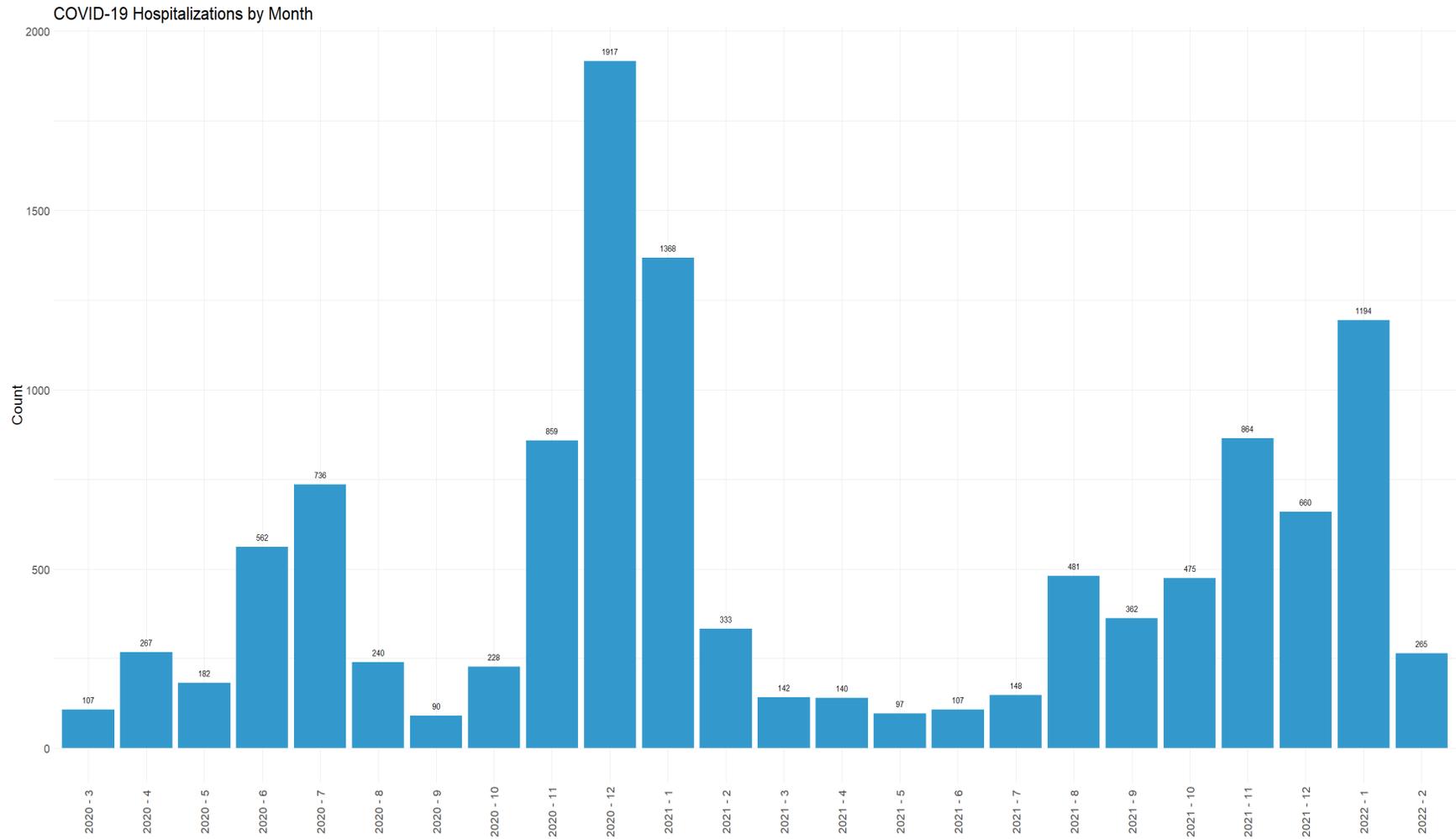
ATTACHMENT 1

Weekly COVID-19 Summary

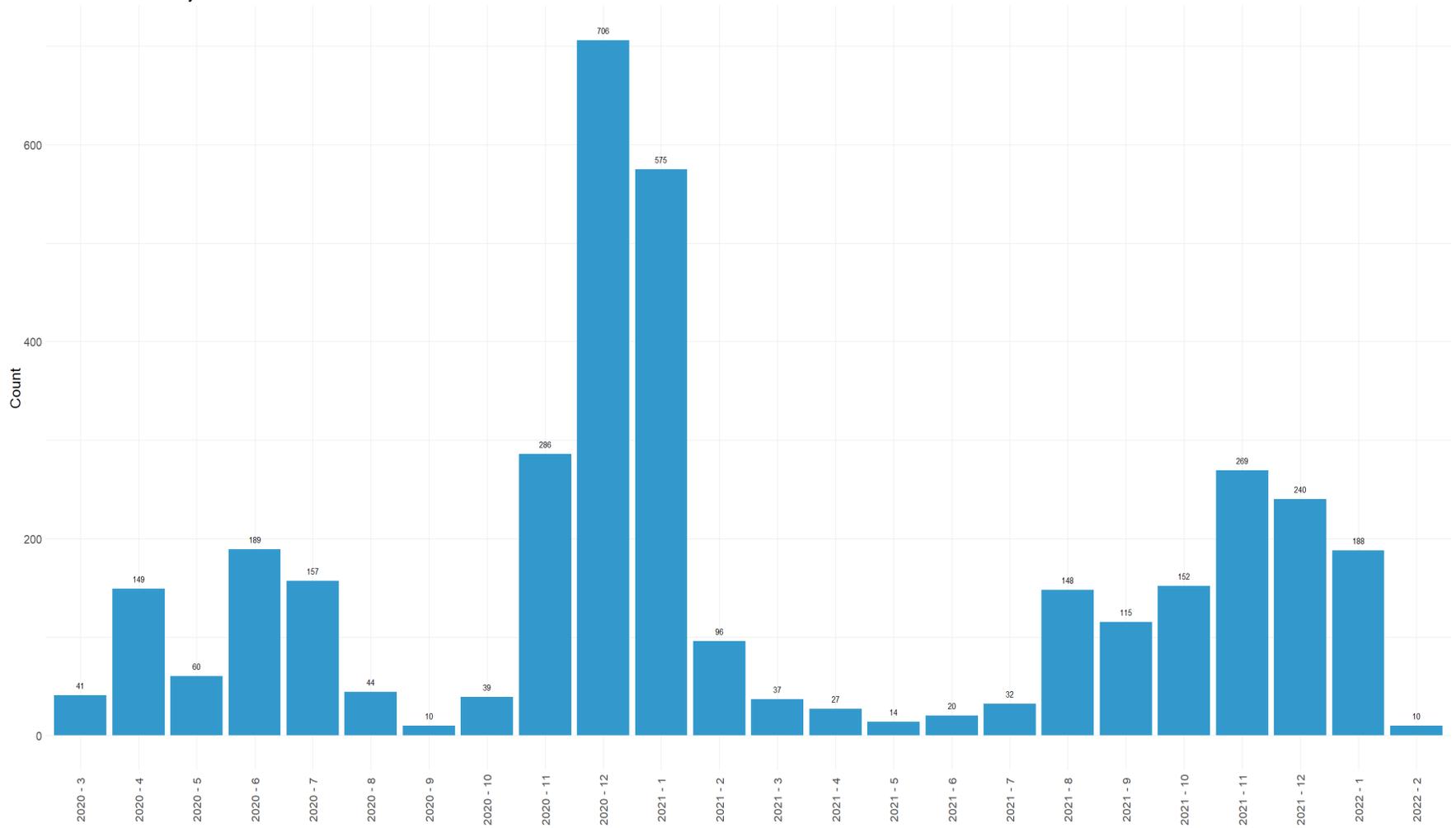
Cumulative Demographic Report - MEDSIS weekly data

Cases



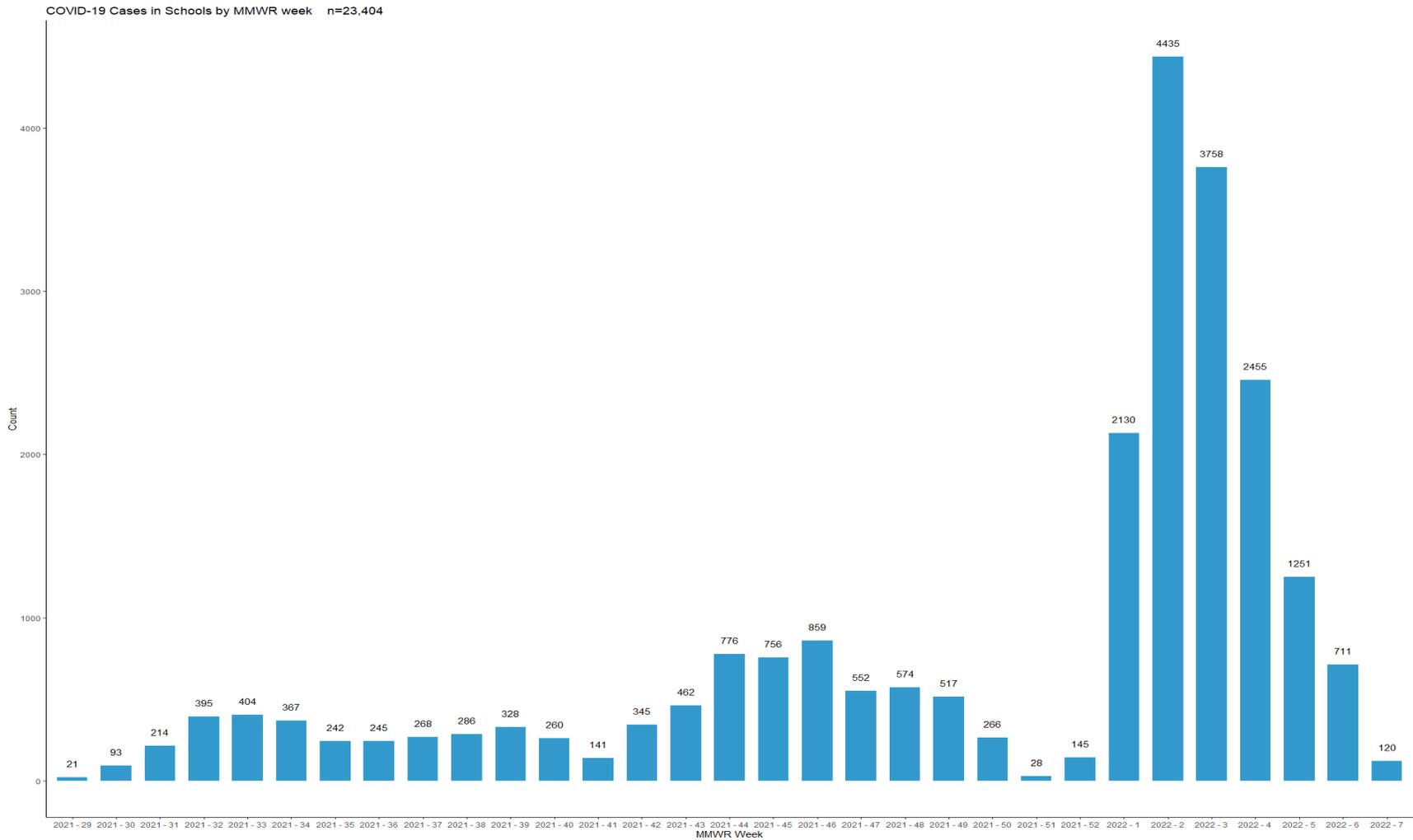


COVID-19 Deaths by Month

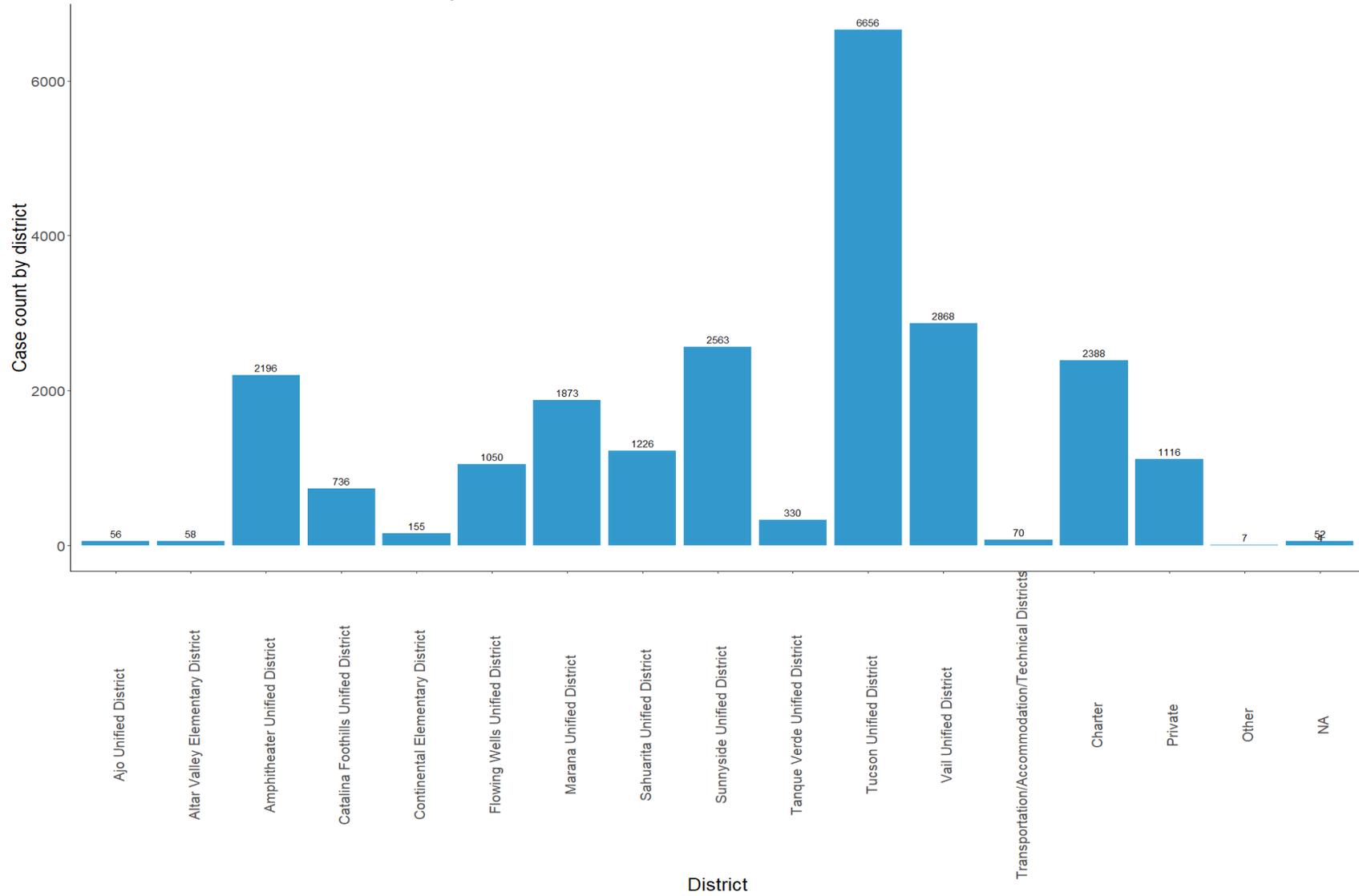


ATTACHMENT 2

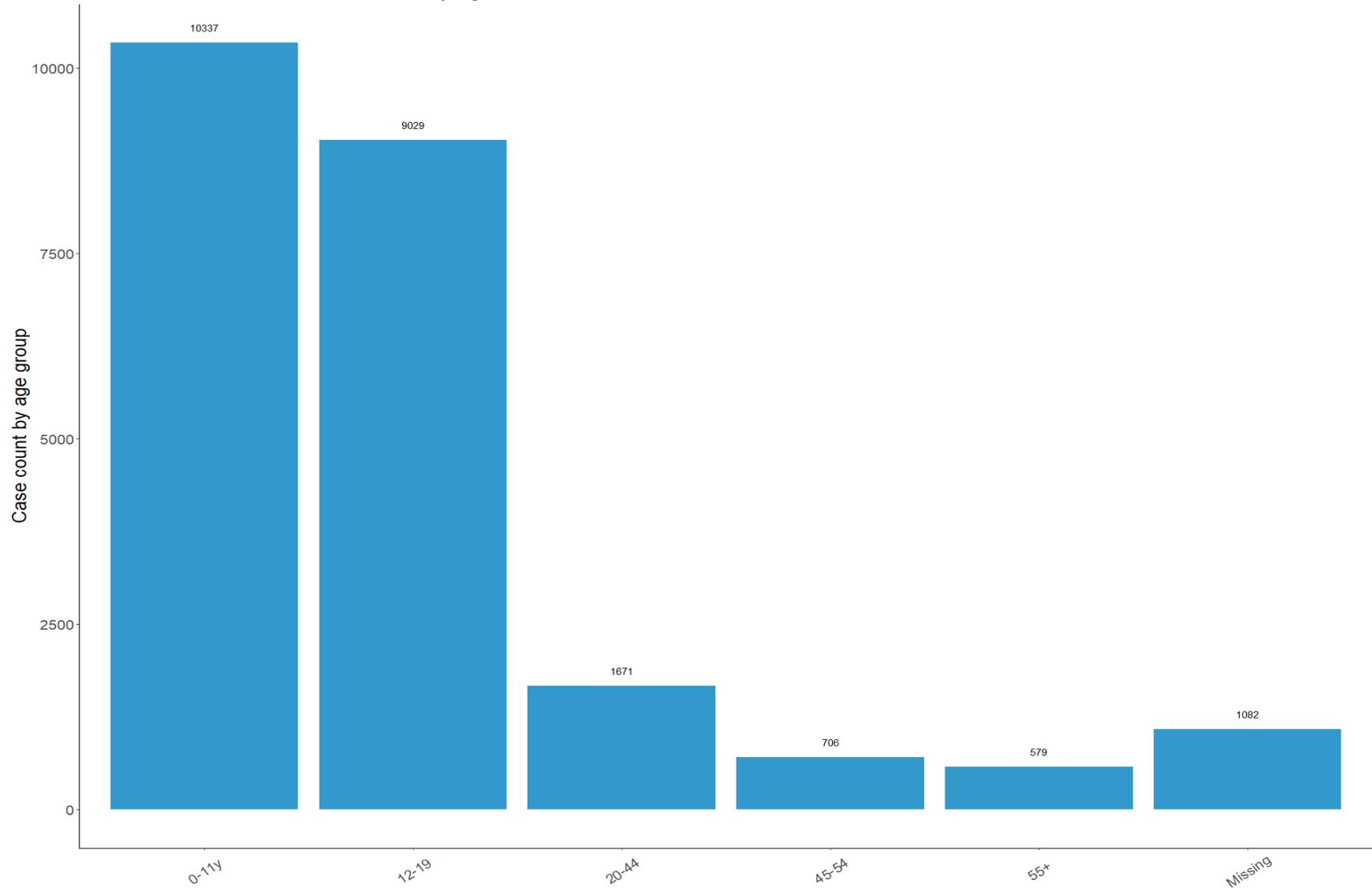
COVID-19 in Pima County Schools



Total COVID-19 Cases in Pima County School Districts n=23,404



Total COVID-19 Cases in Schools by age n=23,404



ATTACHMENT 3

Date: February 25, 2022

To: Francisco Garcia
Deputy County Administrator

From: Theresa Cullen, MD, MS 
Health Department Director

Re: MAB (Monoclonal Antibody) FEMA team in Pima County

Efforts continue to provide Monoclonal Antibody (mAb) therapy to Pima County. Monoclonal Antibody therapy provides treatment to help lessen the severity of symptoms in those who are at high risk for developing severe COVID-19 illness. In cooperation with Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) and resources, funding, and staffing provided by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), Pima County Health Department has assisted Carondelet Health Network to host a new mAb site.

Location: Carondelet St. Raphael's Emergency Center, 7401 S. Wilmot Road

Timeframe:

- Tentative start date of March 1, 2022 (pending FEMA approval) for a 21-day deployment
- Operating hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Staffing:

- 4 FEMA paramedic/LPNs with credentials/certification to provide IV (Intravenous) infusion
- 3 FEMA administrative staff (from current Tucson deployment)

Carondelet Health Network pharmacy is currently working with ADHS to onboard mAbs. Currently, two mAb products that are authorized under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for use in the US by the FDA. **Sotrovimab** and **bebtelovimab** directly act against the SARS-CoV-2 virus and are intended to prevent disease progression in patients with mild-to-moderate COVID-19 at high risk for developing severe COVID-19 disease and/or hospitalization. For immunocompromised patients, pre-exposure prophylaxis with **Evusheld (tixagevimab/cilgavimab)** protects against severe disease due to COVID-19.

Healthcare providers will refer eligible patients to Carondelet St. Raphael's Emergency Center. With assistance from FEMA administrative staff, Carondelet St. Raphael's will process the referrals. Current goal is to process 25 appointments per day.