

**DR. MATT HEINZ**

Supervisor  
District 2



33 N Stone Ave., 11th Floor  
Tucson, AZ 85701  
(520) 724-2702  
district2@pima.gov

## Pima County Board of Supervisors

### **For immediate release – August 10, 2021**

Dr. Matt Heinz, Supervisor, Pima County District 2

Contact: Vanessa Barchfield

Communications & Policy Advisor

Cell: +1.520.367.8958

[Vanessa.Barchfield@pima.gov](mailto:Vanessa.Barchfield@pima.gov)

\*\*\*Please note: Supervisor Heinz is available for press interviews\*\*\*

In response to surging transmission rates of COVID-19 across Arizona – including in Pima County, which was today upgraded to ‘high transmission’ status by the CDC, the highest category of transmission – Supervisor Matt Heinz brought a package of actions to the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday August 10 intended to limit spread of the virus, increase vaccination rates across the community, and ultimately protect public health. The majority of his colleagues on the Board, in a complete abdication of their responsibility to protect public safety, voted down or failed to act on each of these measures.

First, Supervisor Heinz asked his colleagues on the Board to reinstate an emergency declaration saying that COVID-19 represents a public health emergency in Pima County, an action that County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry said was justified given the fact that infections in the region have quadrupled over the past month, from about 300 news cases per week to more than 1,300 new cases per week. Given that a large portion of residents remain unvaccinated, including children under the age of 12 who are not yet eligible, and the Delta variant being much more contagious than previous variants, Pima County is facing a significant public health risk as thousands of students return to the classroom. The emergency declaration would have given the Board important tools to respond quickly to the rapidly evolving public health situation, including giving the Chair of the Board the ability to act by proclamation, in consultation with our public health authorities. Furthermore, the declaration would have sent an important signal that we are still in an extremely dire state of this pandemic and residents must remain vigilant by wearing masks and getting vaccinated to protect their health and that of their loved ones and the whole community. The Board voted the declaration down 3-2.

Supervisor Heinz also brought a measure to the Board that would have mandated mask-wearing indoors in K-12 schools for everyone on campus, including both public and private schools within the county. This measure was intended to keep our children, many of whom are not able to be vaccinated, and their families and teachers, safe. It would also have taken the pressure off school districts by having the County potentially challenge the Arizona Legislature and Governor Doug

**DR. MATT HEINZ**

Supervisor  
District 2



33 N Stone Ave., 11th Floor  
Tucson, AZ 85701  
(520) 724-2702  
district2@pima.gov

## **Pima County Board of Supervisors**

Ducey's reckless ban on school mask mandates directly, freeing up school leadership to focus on matters of teaching and learning. In rejecting this measure by a 3-2 vote, the Board opted to cower to political pressure rather than stand up for our kids, families, and teachers.

Lastly, as a working medical doctor, Supervisor Heinz has grave concerns about the high rates of healthcare workers who choose to remain unvaccinated. As such, Supervisor Heinz asked the Board to mandate vaccines for all healthcare workers licensed by the state and working within Pima County, and their direct support staff. People who work in hospitals and other medical settings are at greatest exposure to the virus – and are also in direct contact with the most medically vulnerable in our community, many of whom are unable to get the vaccine and who are also at highest risk of fatality from the virus. Healthcare workers getting the vaccine is fundamental to their Hippocratic oath to do no harm. On this question, the Board delayed a vote until August 16.

The lack of action taken by the Board of Supervisors today will prolong the coronavirus pandemic in our community and indeed do direct harm to Pima County residents.

After the Board meeting today Supervisor Heinz issued the following statement: “As elected leaders, we should be acting to slow COVID-19 transmissions, hospitalizations, and deaths, regardless of the consequences to our own political fortunes. We were elected to serve the public, and protecting public safety is job #1.”