



## Public Health Advisory Update COVID-19

2021-03

Updated March 5, 2021

This is a rapidly evolving situation. Information will be when critical new information and recommendations are needed.

The Pima County Health Department (PCHD) is committed to ensuring that in 2021 our community is able to resume enjoying the variety of activities previously experienced before the pandemic. This update to the February 2, 2021 Public Health Advisory provides the current status of the pandemic in Pima County, including vaccinations, documents changes to our current disease situation, and provides recommendations to reduce the effects of COVID-19. The Department will continue to provide Public Health Advisory Updates that are informed by an analysis of increasing data and knowledge about COVID-19.

### **What we Know**

COVID-19 is highly contagious and spreads primarily through person-to-person contact. Significant community and individual adherence to mitigation recommendations has the potential to decrease the projected illness and death in our county population. Starting in late November 2020, PCHD identified an accelerated transmission of COVID-19 throughout Pima County. In December 2020, there were over 29,600 cases of COVID -19 identified; in January 2021, there were over 31,600 cases. In February 2021, Pima County saw a significant decrease with approximately 8,000 cases reported during this month.

While this number is decreased compared to December and January, it is still the fourth highest monthly case load since the beginning of the pandemic. There have been over 110,000 COVID-19 cases diagnosed in Pima County as of today. Deaths due to COVID19 accelerated between December 2020 and today ***over one out of every 460 residents of Pima County has died due to COVID-19***. At the current time, the number of infections as well as serious illness is declining, resulting in increased availability of clinical services and hospital beds in Pima County.

### **COVID-19 Response Updates**

#### **Vaccination**

- Pima County is on target to surpass our established goal of 300,000 immunizations by March 31, 2021. We will now meet this target by March 8, 2021. This reflects our commitment to deliver approximately 35,000 vaccinations on a weekly basis dependent upon vaccine availability.
- As of March 4, 2021, over 293,590 COVID-19 vaccines have been given in Pima County through sites at Banner – University Medicine North, Banner – South Kino Stadium, Tucson Convention Center, Tucson Medical Center, as well as additional smaller health care facilities. The University of Arizona has transitioned to become a AZ Department of Health Services (ADHS) distribution site. Further information is available at: [www.pima.gov/covid19vaccine](http://www.pima.gov/covid19vaccine)
- PCHD has committed to the implementation of vaccination strategy focused on delivering vaccine to rural areas and mobile points of distribution for vulnerable populations. Beginning February 1, 2021, approximately 10% of the County's vaccine is being allocated to providing increased access to vulnerable populations.
- PCHD continues to build our vaccination capacity and request additional vaccine allocation to meet our accelerated distribution plan and the state's goals.
- In accordance with [ADHS's Hybrid Prioritization Model](#), once Pima County meets the 55% vaccination rate for those in the current prioritization (1A and 65+), the County will move to vaccinated those 55 and over, as well as frontline essential workers. Frontline workers are workers considered at highest risk for work-related exposure to SARS-CoV-2 because their work-related duties must be performed on-site and involve being in close proximity (<6 feet) to the public or to coworkers.
- Workers previously eligible for vaccination due to their profession (first responders, corrections officers, education sector (teachers and support staff members) and child care workers) will remain eligible and be joined by

professions like food and agricultural workers, U.S. Postal Service workers, manufacturing workers, grocery store workers, and public transit workers.

### Therapeutics

- Monoclonal Antibodies (mABs) are available in Pima County at multiple hospital-based locations. Use of mABs within five days of diagnosis for appropriate patients has the potential to significantly reduce hospitalization and mortality. Providers and patients are encouraged to consider the use of mABs as a therapeutic intervention when appropriate. Go to [www.pima.gov/covid19mab](http://www.pima.gov/covid19mab) for more information.

### COVID-19 Mitigation and Policy Updates

- **Face Covering Requirements** – As mandated by the Board of Supervisors, [Resolution 2020-96](#), will continue. Face coverings must be worn at all times;
  - When indoors and not in one's own residence or if indoors but unable to maintain 6 feet distance from individuals who are not members of the household.
  - When outdoors and within six feet of anyone outside one's own household.
- **Maintenance of Mitigation Measures** – When outside their place of residence, all individuals should strictly comply with the following requirements to the maximum extent possible:
  - Maintain at least six feet of distance from individuals who are not part of their household;
  - Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer;
  - Avoiding all contact with anyone outside their household when sick with a fever, cough, or other COVID-19 symptoms.
  - Covering their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or fabric or, if not possible, into their sleeve or elbow (but not into hands).
- **Limitations on Gatherings** – Public and private gatherings of individuals from separate household's remains strongly discouraged because of the continued significant risk of spreading COVID-19. Indoor gatherings are particularly risky, and gatherings should be held outdoors wherever possible. **Limit gatherings to twenty five or fewer people.**
- **Mandatory reporting of school and business related COVID-19 cases to the County Health Department** – Schools, businesses and governmental entities should continue to ask their employees or students to alert their organization if they test positive for COVID-19 and were present in the workplace or school within the 48 hours prior to onset of symptoms or within 48 hours of the date on which they were tested. Organizations should instruct employees, staff or students to follow isolation and quarantine protocols specified by the County, and exclude positive cases and close contacts from the organization during the isolation or quarantine periods. This information has been and will continue to be used to provide evaluation and mitigation support to the organization that has submitted the report.
- **Voluntary curfew** – Using a 7-day moving average, cases have fallen below the 100/100,000 ratio, which automatically sunsets the County Curfew under [Board of Supervisors Resolution 2020-98](#). Therefore, PCHD is recommending the elimination of the voluntary curfew from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m., as well as the voluntary shelter in place for residents, and older adults and Individuals with Serious Underlying Medical Conditions.

### School Recommendations

- School partners should review [Executive Order 2021-04](#), signed by Governor Ducey on March 3, 2021, regarding in-person learning in the state of Arizona.
- PCHD adopted the CDC guidance at the beginning of February 2021 and continues to support schools and districts in implementing strong layered mitigation strategies as a part of return to learning.
- Indoor athletics pose an increased risk of transmission in our community. Outdoor sports may take place with up to 50 spectators, and must follow strict mitigation guidelines. PCHD has reached out to collaborate with athletic partners to convey guidance and messaging pertaining to school sports.

## Businesses Recommendations

- **All businesses including restaurants, retail or those in critical infrastructure sectors, are strongly encouraged to follow the following recommendations starting March 4, 2021:**
  - Follow Pima County Public Health Department as well as industry-specific guidance related to COVID 19 mitigation plans.
  - Maximize the number of personnel who work from home.
  - Retailers are encouraged to designate hours of operation for specific at-risk populations including those over 65 and those who are immune compromised. Businesses are encouraged to provide curbside operations.
  - Restaurants and other food service facilities may consider continuing primarily operating for takeout, delivery and curbside pickup.
  - Outdoor recreational facilities may continue as long as group activities are limited to less than 25 people and COVID-19 mitigation measures are followed.
  - The following businesses and activities should implement strong layered COVID-19 mitigation measures to decrease viral transmission:
    - Indoor playgrounds and recreational facilities including indoor swimming pools.
    - Movie theaters (except that outdoor screenings are allowed if physical distance of at least six feet can be maintained).
    - Fitness and dance studios should consider limiting capacity, unless classes are outside, participants wear face coverings at all times, and physical distance of at least six feet can be maintained.

## Sports and Events

- PCHD has developed guidance that will assist in re-opening of our sport facilities with appropriate COVID-19 guidance. The guidelines for using facilities can be found on the Back to Business webpage under "[Operating Guidance for Businesses and Events During the Pandemic](#)". The guidelines include:
  - Initial spectator limit of 50 individuals per outdoor field/use area
  - No spectators at indoor venues unless otherwise reviewed and approved by the Pima County Health Department ;
  - Required face coverings by coaches, officials and spectators, and wearing of masks by players when not involved in active play;
  - Limiting seating to non-bleacher areas where spectators can keep six (6) feet spacing between separate parties;
  - Posting of COVID-19 advisory signage;
  - Designating event staff or volunteers to monitor and enforce adherence to mitigation measures; and
  - Completion of an attestation form accepting the required mitigation measures.

*The Pima County Health Department helps to guide the COVID-19 response and recommend appropriate layered mitigation that should help minimize COVID-19 transmission and save lives. As we have realized over the previous months, the situation is fluid. PCHD recognizes the ongoing strain associated with the COVID-19 pandemic on individual lives as well as our educational institutions, businesses and community. PCHD remains grateful for the County residents' cooperation and commitment to wellness.*