



Public Health Advisory Update COVID-19 2021-01

Updated January 7, 2021

This is a rapidly evolving situation. Public Health Information will be updated weekly and more frequently when critical new information and recommendations are needed.

The Pima County Health Department (PCHD) is committed to ensuring that our community in 2021 is able to resume enjoying the variety of activities previously experienced before the pandemic. This update to the December 31, 2020 Public Health Advisory is designed to update the current status of the pandemic in Pima County and provide 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 the increasing data and knowledge about COVID-19.

What we know

COVID-19 is highly contagious and spreads primarily through person-to-person contact. Over the last two months, PCHD has identified an accelerated transmission of COVID-19 throughout Pima County. In December, 29,663 COVID-19 cases were diagnosed. This number is greater than the number of cases that were diagnosed in Pima County during the eight months from March through October. January 2021 is now on pace to surpass the number of cases that were diagnosed in December. Our projections indicate up to 37,000 cases will be diagnosed in January.

Deaths due to COVID-19 have accelerated in the past 3 weeks, with **over one out of every 1,000 residents of Pima County dead due to COVID-19**. The increased number infections as well as patients who are seriously ill have severely affected the availability of hospital beds in Pima County. Projected infection rates indicate that public health and healthcare resources in Pima County will continue to be stretched as they have been for the past four weeks. Significant community and individual adherence to current recommendations has the potential to decrease the projected illness and death in our county population

Continued Actions and Vigilance

Public Health Recommendations: Curfew and Shelter-in-Place

- **Compliance with Mandatory Curfew from 10PM to 5AM** – All residents limit travel during these hours to essential activities as previously defined in the voluntary curfew announcement. [Pima County Resolution 2020-98](#)
- **Voluntary Shelter in Place** – All residents should stay home as the best way to prevent the risk of COVID-19; trips and activities outside the home should be minimized. Exceptions for this stay-at-home recommendation involve the following activities: seeking medical care, purchasing food/supplies for home consumption or use, outdoor exercise, pet care, connecting with homeless or domestic violence shelters, and attending work or school.
- **Voluntary Shelter in Place for Older Adults and Individuals with Serious Underlying Medical Conditions** – Older adults (those age 65 or older) and individuals with serious underlying medical conditions (including immunocompromised state, chronic kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, obesity, serious heart conditions, sickle cell disease, and diabetes) are strongly urged to stay in their places of residence except to access critical necessities such as food and medicine.
- **Physical Distancing Requirements** – 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;
 - Wear a face covering whether inside or outdoors when around others;
 - Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer;
 - Covering their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or fabric or, if not possible, into their sleeve or elbow (but not into hands); and
 - Avoiding all contact with anyone outside their household when sick with a fever, cough, or other COVID-19 symptoms.
- **Face Covering Requirements** – As mandated by the Board of Supervisors, [Resolution 2020-96](#), face coverings must be worn at all times:
 1. When indoors and not in one's own residence or if indoors but unable to maintain six feet distance from individuals who are not members of the household.
 2. Whenever outdoors and within six feet of anyone outside one's own household.
- **Limitations on Gatherings** – Public and private gatherings of individuals from separate household's remains strongly discouraged because it carries significant risk of spreading COVID-19. Indoor gatherings are particularly risky, and gatherings should be held outdoors wherever possible. **Limit gatherings to ten or fewer people.**

- **Childcare and pre-kindergarten facilities** – In accordance with State guidelines, these facilities may remain open based at their current level of activity.
- **Continued Mandatory Reporting Regarding school employees, students, and business workers contracting COVID-19** – Schools, businesses and governmental entities should continue to ask their employees or students to alert their organizations 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.

Businesses Recommendations

All businesses including restaurants, retail or those in critical infrastructure sectors, are strongly encouraged to follow the following recommendations:

- If the business is allowed to operate under current state and county rules:
 - Limit indoor occupancy to no more than 25% of their total occupancy, including personnel. Businesses must oversee entry and exit to ensure that maximum capacity is not exceeded.
 - Follow 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 operate for takeout, delivery and curbside pickup. Persons in an establishment to pick-up a takeout order do not count towards the 25% indoor occupancy limitation, but those persons must follow all other requirements, including proper physical distancing.
- Outdoor recreational facilities may continue as long as group activities are limited to household members.
- Medical facilities may continue to provide non-urgent medical and dental care.
- The following businesses and activities should consider temporary closure to decrease viral transmission:
 - Indoor playgrounds and recreational facilities including indoor swimming pools.
 - Fitness and dance studios except when all classes are outside, participants wear face coverings at all times, and physical distance of at least six feet can be maintained.
 - Hair salons and barbershops.
 - Movie theaters (except that outdoor screenings are allowed if physical distance of at least six feet can be maintained).

Therapeutics Update

Current Status

- Monoclonal Antibodies are increasingly available in Pima County. Working in conjunction with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, PCHD, and the state of Arizona, TMC is launching a Monoclonal Antibody IV infusion unit as a pilot project. This is only the second unit that HHS ASPR has established in the country. The first site was in El Centro, Calif., with an additional pilot planned for Las Vegas. Monoclonal Antibody Infusions have shown a significant decrease in hospitalizations for patients that receive them.

Vaccination Update

Current Status

- As of January 6, 2021, over 20,000 COVID-19 vaccines have been given in Pima County through PODs that are supported by Banner and TMC as well as additional health care facilities. Updated information is available at: www.pima.gov/covid19vaccine.
- The PCHD has committed to standing up an additional 4 PODs in the Tucson area in the next few weeks as well as the implementation of the rural vaccination strategy.
- PCHD has established a goal of 300,000 immunizations by March 31, 2021 (depending upon vaccine availability)

Moving to a Resilient Community Normal

PCHD is working to ensure the following infrastructure is in place for rebuilding a stronger community, using the lessons learned from our response to the COVID-19 Pandemic:

- Enhanced public health infrastructure including case investigation and contact tracing
- Provision of ongoing support to individuals and families who are currently in isolation due to COVID-19 or quarantining due to being a contact with a person with COVID-19.
- Commitment to advancing health equity through Health in All Policies.

PCHD recognizes the ongoing strain associated with the COVID-19 pandemic on individual lives as well as our educational institutions, businesses and community. As we work through this accelerated phase of transmission, we anticipate that we will soon be in an accelerated phase of vaccination, resulting in decreased transmission of COVID-19 and improved community wellness.