



Public Health Advisory Update COVID-19 2021-06

Updated April 23, 2021

This is a rapidly evolving situation. This advisory will be updated 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 March 31, 2021 Public Health Advisory (PHA) provides a status update of the pandemic in Pima County, including the latest on vaccination efforts, disease situation, and ongoing recommendations to reduce the impact 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 been demonstrated to decrease illness and death. Starting in late November 2020, PCHD identified an accelerated transmission of COVID-19 throughout Pima County that lasted until February 2021. Pima County continues to see a decline in our case rate, with approximately 1,440 cases reported from April 1-April 18. This compares to 6,135 cases reported in February 2021 and 2,646 cases reported in March 2021.

There have been over 114,000 COVID-19 cases diagnosed in Pima County as of April 18, 2021. 2,388 deaths have been attributed to COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic. Over ***one out of every 450 residents of Pima County has died due to COVID-19***. Increased availability of clinical services, hospital beds and timely epidemiological response continues to occur within Pima County.

COVID-19 Response Updates

Vaccination

- As of April 21, 2021, over 621,000 COVID-19 vaccines have been given in Pima County at numerous locations (far surpassing our goal of 300,000 immunizations by March 31, 2021). Further information is available at: www.pima.gov/covid19vaccine
- PCHD is delivering vaccine to rural areas and mobile points of distribution serving vulnerable populations, including schools, communities of faith, businesses and other organizations.
- Starting April 5, 2021, there are no current restrictions on eligibility for vaccination. Anyone over 16 years and older can be vaccinated.

Therapeutics

- Monoclonal antibody therapies remain available in Pima County under Emergency Use Authorization, including REGEN-COV (casirivimab and imdevimab, administered together) and bamlanivimab and etesevimab, administered together, for the same uses as previously authorized for bamlanivimab alone at multiple hospital-based locations. More information is available www.pima.gov/covid19mab and <https://www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/statement-on-bamlanivimab-plus-etesevimab-eua/>

COVID-19 Mitigation Measures

- **Face Coverings** – [Resolution 2020-96](#) passed by the Board of Supervisors Dec. 4 is still in effect. Face coverings must be worn at all times when in public or when less than 6 feet from individuals not in the same household. Public places include schools, businesses, gym, restaurants among other settings.
- **Maintenance of Mitigation Measures** – When outside their place of residence, PCHD requests that all people comply with the following recommendations to the maximum extent possible:
 - Maintain 6 feet of distance between individuals who are not part of their household;
 - Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer;
 - Avoid contact with anyone when sick with a fever, cough, or other COVID-19 symptoms.

- Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or fabric or, if not possible, into their sleeve or elbow (but not into hands).
- **Gatherings** – The Health Department continues to request that gatherings should be held outdoors wherever possible. PCHD requests that outdoor gatherings be limited to 250 people and only occur in settings and venues where physical distancing is possible. Events occurring indoors should follow the mitigation measures above while also providing a minimum of 150 square feet per person.
- **Mandatory reporting of confirmed and suspected cases of COVID-19 cases continues to be a requirement of schools, businesses, and government entities** – Schools, businesses and governmental entities must require employees or students to report 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. Entities 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 school or workplace during the isolation or quarantine periods. This information is used to provide evaluation and mitigation support to the reporting organization.

School and Childcare Settings

- The school dashboard indicates that Pima County is considered to have substantial transmission; data is available at <https://www.azdhs.gov/covid19/index.php#schools-dashboard>
- PCHD adopted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention school and childcare guidance at the beginning of March 2021 and continues to support schools and districts in implementing strong layered mitigation strategies as a part of their return to learning.
- Notwithstanding the Governor’s action, in Pima County the Board of Supervisors Resolution 2020-96 is still in effect. The resolution expressly includes all schools and requires everyone over the age of five to wear a mask where physical distancing of 6 feet cannot be maintained.
- Indoor athletic events pose an increased risk of transmission. Outdoor sports may take place and should follow strict mitigation guidelines.

Businesses and Public Spaces

- Business entities should follow state, County, and industry-specific guidance related to COVID-19 mitigation.
- Businesses should require employees and customers to wear masks in public spaces, and ensure that work or service environment permit physical distancing of 6 feet between employees and/or the public.
- Restaurants and other food service facilities are encouraged to provide for 6 feet of spacing between parties, require mask use when not consuming food or beverage, maximize the use of outdoor dining opportunities, and continue takeout, delivery and curbside pickup.
- PCHD requests that gyms, fitness and dance studios limit capacity when operating indoors and require participant use of face coverings at all times, and physical distance of at least six feet between attendees. Refer to the AZDHS guidance available at [indoor-gyms-fitness-centers.pdf \(azdhs.gov\)](#).

Sports

PCHD has developed guidance that will assist in re-opening of sports facilities with appropriate COVID-19 guidance. The best practice recommendations include:

- Spectator limit of 250 individuals per outdoor field/use area at the current time, with expected increase in the number of spectators allowed consistent with an ongoing decrease in COVID-19 cases in Pima County **and** an increase in vaccination rates. At the current time, COVID-19 cases remain above 50 cases/100,000 population/week.
- Required face coverings by coaches, officials and spectators, and wearing of masks by players when not involved in active play.

- Limiting seating to areas where spectators can keep six (6) feet spacing between separate parties for unvaccinated spectators; immunized spectators can be seated less than six feet apart within a physically separate designated vaccinated area.
- Posting of COVID-19 advisory signage.
- Designating event staff or volunteers to monitor and enforce adherence to mitigation measures.

These requirements apply to all Pima County owned facilities. Event specific mitigation plans can be submitted to the Health Department in coordination with the County department that operates the facility,

County Response Priorities for 2021

PCHD is working to build infrastructure that supports a stronger community, using the lessons learned from our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the major priorities as we continue forward include:

- Increase the delivery of COVID-19 vaccines throughout Pima County
- Partner with healthcare entities to provide therapeutics and care to those with COVID-19
- Advance health equity and access to services for our diverse community
- Enhance public health infrastructure
- Increase engagement with Pima County residents
- Support individuals and families impacted by COVID-19

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.