

ADHS COVID-19 MEMO

Thank you for your continued support and partnership in helping the Arizona Department of Health Services (Department) address COVID-19 in Arizona. In the continuing spirit of transparency and collaboration, the Department would like to inform you of the three most salient COVID-19 issues that the Department is currently addressing:

6.19.20

- ADHS is working with partners to amplify COVID-19 prevention messages. We have multiple [communication tools](#) including videos and images available for download and reposting. Our communications team continues to develop additional messaging to continue educating Arizonans.
- ADHS is partnering with ASU to provide additional funding to scale up saliva testing in Arizona. This new test, developed by ASU, helps to expand the specimen types that can be collected for COVID testing and provides options for testing that reduce potential exposure to healthcare workers and the amount of personal protective equipment required for testing.
- Testing capacity continues to increase in Arizona, with 128 testing sites now listed on the ADHS [COVID-19 Testing Locations webpage](#). While this does not represent all locations providing COVID-19 testing in Arizona, many testing providers have signed up to be listed on the webpage. Testing sites can be added to the webpage by completing the form [here](#).

PREVIOUS ADHS COVID-19 MEMOS:

6.18.20

- Yesterday's executive order required businesses to update and enforce policies to limit and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. We've posted requirements for [businesses](#) and [restaurants](#) on our website.
- ADHS is concluding initial testing of skilled nursing facilities, with specimens collected from nearly 15,000 staff and residents of 123 facilities. About 7% of diagnostic (PCR) tests have been positive and about 6% have been antibody (serology) positive. ADHS provides infection control technical assistance to facilities as needed. Future stages of this project will include testing for other facility types that house vulnerable adults in congregate settings and follow up testing on skilled nursing facilities.
- ADHS is working with the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry to coordinate antibody (serology) testing for employees and contractors. This week, we began this testing at the Florence facility, which includes nearly 1,000 staff and contractors. We plan to test at one facility each week. We are currently developing timelines and identifying resources to test all inmates.

6.17.20

- Today, Dr. Christ joined Governor Ducey and Major General McGuire at a press conference to provide an update on COVID-19 status and mitigation actions in Arizona. Information about the press conference is available [here](#).
- The use of cloth face coverings when in public is an important measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Additional guidance about masks is available [here](#). As of today, local governments may implement mask and face-covering policies and determine enforcement measures.
- ADHS continues to work with county health departments to implement contact tracing, a tool that allows public health to follow up with known close contacts of COVID-19 cases to give them guidance about staying home and monitoring for symptoms. As announced in today's press conference, we are currently onboarding and training 300 National Guard members to provide additional contact tracing support across Arizona.

NCAI COVID-19 Resources for Indian Country Website

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) hosts a COVID-19 Resource Website that includes the following content:

- Administration and Legislative Updates, including policy and stimulus funding information
- Resources on COVID-19 from trusted sources
- Information on how you can get involved, including donating to our COVID-19 Response Fund
- COVID-19 Forums and Webinars - videos of recent events

Click on the link below to access the NCAI COVID-19 Resource Website or visit: ncai.org/Covid-19

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Read **NCAI's letter to the Department of Education** urging the immediate release of funding to Bureau of Indian Education and Tribally-Controlled Schools under the CARES Act.
- The Department of Treasury announces **formula for the disbursement of the second tranche of Coronavirus Relief Funds**.
- The Federal Reserve Board expands its Main Street Lending Program to allow **more small and medium-sized businesses to be able to receive support**.

COVID-19 RESOURCES

COVID-19 Data Situation Summaries will now be updated every Wednesday on the **Other Resources** page:

- NCAI COVID-19 Data - **Situation Summary** (June 17, 2020)
- NCAI COVID-19 Data - **IHS Area Data Summary** (June 17, 2020)

6.16.20

- Today we reported an increase of 2,392 COVID-19 cases in Arizona, bringing our total to 39,097 cases. Please encourage your constituents to do their part to slow the spread of COVID-19:
 - Maintain physical distancing of at least six feet in public spaces
 - Thoroughly wash your hands
 - Wear a face covering when out in public

- Cover your coughs and sneezes
 - Stay home when you're sick
- Healthcare professionals continue to register to support the response through [ESAR-VHP](#). Please consider promoting this opportunity to your constituents who are expressing interest. This will be a key location where public health will be sourcing additional staffing resources as needed to support hospital surge plans and also a tool for us to recruit additional contact tracers.
- We continue to update our FAQs as additional information about the virus emerges. You can check them out [here](#) and use the links at the top to jump to sections of interest.

6.15.20

- We accepted a shipment of approximately 500,000 gowns today, which we are breaking down to distribute to local health departments for healthcare workers and first responders. Trucks departed the warehouse today en route to county and tribal health departments with multiple other PPE items. We continue to work to ensure partners have the supplies they need in their communities.
- We are working to support expanded testing in the state, including shipping out testing supplies to all county health departments to provide testing capacity in their jurisdiction and augment available private supplies.
- We continue to provide guidance for individuals about what steps they should take if they test positive for COVID-19 or are awaiting test results. Our [Release from Isolation guidance](#) has up to date information about what to do depending on their symptoms and test results.

6.12.20

- Testing continues to significantly increase in Arizona, with diagnostic PCR testing to date in June already surpassing the number of tests conducted in the month of April. Testing sites continue to be updated on our [webpage](#) to assist Arizonans in identifying where they can seek testing.
- Today we met with county health officials as part of our ongoing discussions related to the COVID-19 response. Topics included current data trends, mitigation measures, and coordination across state and local public health to provide support for schools as they look to reopen in the coming months.
- On Tuesday, CDC [released a study](#) about COVID-19 among young, healthy US service members aboard an aircraft carrier. The study found that individuals taking preventative measures had lower infection rates than those who did not take preventative measures, with the greatest effect observed in those wearing a face covering. A few weeks ago, ADHS posted a [blog](#) about the proper way to wear a face covering, which we encourage Arizonans to revisit as we learn more about the importance of this mitigation tool.

6.11.20

- Today, Dr. Christ joined Governor Ducey and Major General McGuire to provide an update on COVID-19 in Arizona. The video is available [here](#).
- ADHS continues to emphasize the importance of everyone in Arizona doing their part to [stop the spread of COVID-19](#). This includes staying at least six feet from others when out in the community, wearing a face mask when you can't be physically distanced, washing or sanitizing your hands, and staying home when sick. These precautions are especially important for [vulnerable individuals at higher risk of COVID-19 complications](#), including those over 65 or with certain health conditions, as well as those who live with or care for them.
- ADHS also urges businesses to do their part to stop the spread of COVID-19 by establishing and implementing policies consistent with the recommendations of ADHS, CDC, OSHA, and/or the Department of Labor. Guidance for businesses is available on our [Workplaces and Community page](#), with specific detailed guidance available for [retail](#), [restaurants](#), [aquatic venues](#), [fitness providers](#), [casinos and gaming facilities](#), [spas](#), and [places of worship](#).

6.10.20

- As of today, 123 testing sites are listed on our [COVID-19 Testing Sites webpage](#). We are working with public health and healthcare partners to reach out to additional testing sites and to ensure geographic distribution of sites.
- Earlier this week, Dr. Christ joined Governor Ducey and Superintendent Hoffman to receive feedback from school leaders on their reopening plans and challenges. Today, we partnered with the Arizona Department of Education to provide background to schools on the public health recommendations included in the [Roadmap for Reopening Schools](#).
- We continue to host and participate in numerous meetings with partners to ensure shared situational awareness and coordinated response. These include local county and tribal public health officials, clinical partners at hospitals and healthcare associations, various state agencies, and federal partners.

6.9.20

- Today, ADHS distributed approximately 725,000 gowns, 225,000 goggles, hand sanitizer, and other protective equipment to 62 jurisdictions and agencies across the state for further distribution to local healthcare and first responders. ADHS continues to work with DEMA and National Guard partners to obtain, receive, and redistribute PPE to communities across Arizona.
- We recently updated guidance on our [Schools page](#) for organized youth activities. ADHS recommends that attendees stay home if they are feeling sick or at a higher risk for severe illness. When in attendance, remain at least 6 feet away from other participants and activity facilitators. In addition, activity organizers and coaches should take the following steps:
 - Wear a cloth face covering or mask when possible, and provide coverings or masks to adult attendees.
 - Increase the availability of alcohol-based hand sanitizer and handwashing stations for adults and youth to use during and following activities.
 - Operate with reduced occupancy and capacity to reduce large groups.
 - Implement sanitation protocols, including sanitizing sports and activity equipment before and after each use.
- Hospital bed availability remains above 20% for both ICU (24% bed availability) and inpatient beds (22% bed availability). ADHS continues to monitor this data on an ongoing basis.

6.8.20

- This weekend, ADHS issued a [press release](#) announcing an increase in COVID-19 cases and urging the public to take action to prevent the spread of disease (see [What Everyone Needs to Do](#)). The release also provided an update on hospital capacity. As of today, 23% of ICU beds, 21% of inpatient beds, and 65% of ventilators are reported to be available across the state.
- ADHS [released a letter](#) as an update to the [March 25th hospital preparedness letter](#), urging hospitals to continue their work in preparing for a potential surge in patients. While hospitals are still reporting greater than 20% ICU and inpatient bed availability statewide, ADHS used the letter to highlight strategies hospitals can consider implementing if they are concerned about nearing bed capacity within their own facilities. These include activating their emergency plans as recommended in the March 25th letter and directed by [E.O. 2020-16](#), reducing or suspending elective surgeries, implementing plans to staff surge beds established pursuant to E.O 2020-16, optimizing staffing, participating in the Arizona Surge Line, reporting data to ADHS, and maintaining communication with healthcare and public health partners.
- ADHS continues to partner with hospitals to maintain the [Arizona Surge Line](#), which to date has facilitated the transfer of over 600 patients to appropriate levels of care. The Surge Line is a critical tool in place to support potential patient surge by transferring patients to locations with existing bed availability to meet their needed level of care.

6.5.20

- Additional sites continue to be added to our [webpage listing COVID-19 testing site locations](#). So far, 85 sites are listed in nine counties with more to come. We are working with local health

- officers to ensure additional sites within their communities are registered. Sites in your district can be listed by filling out the form [here](#).
- The Arizona Testing Blitz, which ran all 5 Saturdays in May, resulted in a significant increase in testing for Arizonans and helped raise awareness that testing is now more widely available across the state. Testing Blitz sites operated in 11 of Arizona's 15 counties with between 30 and 80 sites participating on a given Saturday. Diagnostic testing reported to date in May (172,208 PCR tests) more than tripled compared to testing in April (54,281 PCR tests).
 - Reported COVID-19 case counts increased again today, with the highest number of cases reported the week of May 24. We encourage all Arizonans to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by washing their hands, avoiding touching their face, covering coughs and sneezes, disinfecting items, physically distancing, wearing a cloth face covering, and staying home when sick. A full list of prevention tips and other important information for the public is available on our [What Everyone Needs to Do webpage](#).

6/4/2020

- Dr. Christ appeared alongside Governor Ducey, Major General McGuire, and Colonel Silbert at a [press conference](#) today to provide updates on Arizona's COVID-19 response and ongoing activities.
- ADHS continues to support skilled nursing facilities in order to prevent and control COVID-19 spread in these settings serving Arizona's vulnerable adults.
 - ADHS has worked with partners to facilitate testing of all staff and residents in state licensed skilled nursing facilities. To date, specimen collection has occurred among 8227 staff and residents affiliated with 71 facilities. An additional 16 facilities will be doing their own specimen collection. Testing is scheduled to be completed at all 147 facilities next week.
 - ADHS Licensing surveyors have also conducted phone-based infection control surveys with 100% of these facilities and in-person infection control surveys with 88% of them. All facilities will receive an in-person survey by next week.
- ADHS continues to coordinate with the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry to facilitate testing of staff and contractors with inmate contact and to support implementation of infection control.
 - Serology testing is available to ADCRR staff and contractors through the University of Arizona, which has 31 testing sites throughout the state. In addition, Sonora Quest Labs has been contracted to complete onsite testing, particularly for prison facilities in rural areas without adequate healthcare access.
 - ADHS has completed Infection Control Assessment and Response surveys for all state prison complexes and will follow up with onsite visits through the month of June.

6/3/2020

- An opinion piece authored by Superintendent Hoffman and Dr. Christ was published on [AZCentral](#) today. The article discusses the importance of school in children's health and well being and steps schools and parents can take to safely reopen.
- Our ADHS team, in partnership with DEMA, and the National Guard, continue to work tirelessly to receive, repackage, and distribute needed PPE throughout Arizona. For example, to date, nearly 500,000 respirators have been distributed. In addition, the [Battelle critical care decontamination system](#) is in place, providing an opportunity for healthcare and first response agencies to decontaminate their N95 respirators for safe reuse. As of today, 399 entities have registered to use this resource.
- We recently updated guidance for dentists on our [Healthcare Provider webpage](#). This information is on the Dental Care tab at the bottom of the page.

6/2/2020

- Today we launched a [new webpage](#) showing where Arizonans can go for COVID-19 testing. Additional sites will be added on an ongoing basis. Sites interested in being listed can complete the form [here](#).

- Today we had a large increase in reported cases, up 1,127 from the prior day. This brings our total number of COVID-19 cases in Arizona to 21,250. As testing continues to increase and reopening is phased in, we expect to see increases in cases. COVID-19 is still in our community. ADHS continues to monitor data including case counts, percent positivity, and hospital status.
- ADHS encourages people, especially those vulnerable to severe complications of disease, to [take prevention measures](#). We continue to update guidance on our website as new information is available. Today, we posted new resources from CDC with guidance for [going out](#) and for [using transportation](#).

6/1/2020

- This morning we updated our [data dashboard](#) to show COVID-19 cases and deaths broken down by their classification - probable or confirmed. Hovering over the case or death count on the Summary section of the dashboard will show this information. We [published a blog today](#) providing additional background on case definitions and how they are used to conduct epidemiologic surveillance for reportable communicable diseases nationwide.
- This weekend wrapped up the Arizona Testing Blitz, with between 30 and 80 sites participating across 10 of Arizona's 15 counties. Complete data from the events is not yet available, but the participation of the provider community significantly increased testing availability in Arizona in May, with May diagnostic (PCR) testing numbers nearly tripling compared to April based on reports to date. We are so appreciative of Arizona healthcare providers for their support of these events.
- Additional PPE continues to arrive at our warehouse for distribution to local health departments to share with their healthcare and first response partners. This weekend we received specimen collection materials, isolation gowns, and other critical supplies.

5/29/2020

- Tomorrow is the final day of the May [Arizona Testing Blitz](#). Nearly 50 sites around Arizona are participating. In the coming days, we will be standing up a website listing testing locations around the state with their hours of operation to provide better situational awareness of where Arizonans can go to be tested.
- Yesterday, Governor Ducey signed an [executive order](#) to assist Arizona families with child care. The order allows ADHS to waive certain child care licensing requirements for facilities providing care to school age children. Additional information about child care facilities with approved waivers will be posted on the Department's [Child Care Licensing webpage](#).
- We continue to update our [COVID-19 FAQs](#) as new information emerges. Recent FAQ updates include information about COVID-19 symptoms and background on Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children.

5/28/2020

- In today's press conference with Governor Ducey, Dr. Christ discussed the success of the [Arizona Surge Line](#), a tool highlighted as a best practice by CMS that offers a free statewide 24/7 call line to quickly coordinate the transfer, admission, and discharge of COVID-19 patients. To date, the Arizona Surge Line has facilitated the transfer of over 400 patients to an appropriate level of care.
- [Guidance was released today](#) to provide best practices for opening of organized youth activities, such as youth sports.
- ADHS continues to monitor and post a variety of COVID-19 data, including hospital-related data. A top priority is ensuring the health of our healthcare system. Some of the critical data points for assessing this are the Hospital Bed Usage & Availability and Ventilator Usage & Availability sections of the [data dashboard](#). Both of these indicators demonstrate current availability of inpatient beds, ICU beds, and ventilators in Arizona

5/27/2020

- Today, ADHS hosted a series of meetings with hospital, laboratory, and skilled nursing facility partners with responsibility for reporting under the updated enhanced surveillance advisory

([Executive Order 2020-37](#)) to discuss responsibilities under the advisory and answer questions about reporting.

- Approximately 10 million face masks and face shields were sorted by our warehouse team and loaded on trucks for distribution to county and tribal health departments for further distribution to healthcare and first response partners.
- Over 40 sites in eight counties have signed on to participate in Saturday's Arizona Testing Blitz. More information is available at azhealth.gov/testingblitz.

5/26/2020

- Updated COVID-19 projections and models are now available from university and federal partners. An [ADHS Director's blog posted today](#) provides more details and links to the latest models.
- ADHS continues to host and participate in calls with multiple partners in order to ensure a coordinated response and mechanisms for feedback. Just today, ADHS participated in separate calls with DEMA, county health officials, Navajo Nation and associated partners, ArMA, CDC, the Vice President, and other individual partners.
- The [Workplaces and Community section](#) on our COVID-19 webpage was recently updated. Tabs on the bottom of the page for businesses, law enforcement, faith-based organizations, restaurants, and shelters provide reopening guidance for these various settings.