

Arizona COVID-19 cases

The Arizona Department of Health Services has reported 16,783 positive COVID-19 cases and 8,448 cases in Maricopa County as of May 26, 2020. Out of the 273,070 COVID-19 tests completed to date in Arizona, 5.6% have tested positive for the virus. In Maricopa County, 1,092 patients (13%) have been admitted to a hospital and 304 (4%) admitted to an ICU since the county began collecting data on Jan. 22.

Update from Dr. William Ellert, Chief Medical Officer

The Chief Medical Officers of hospitals throughout the state have been collaborating and sharing information throughout this pandemic. Recently we agreed upon a statement from all of us regarding moving forward in the pandemic. Although it is our hope that this will be published publicly, I wanted to share it with you as well. Please see the attached Safe Behaviors Editorial.

Employee Health hotline

A reminder to please notify your hospital's Employee Health office if you go home sick. Employee Health staff will stay in touch daily before you return to work.

The Abrazo Employee Health hotline for COVID-19 questions is available Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., and Saturday-Sunday from 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. The hotline is for Abrazo employees only and may be reached at 602-246-5597.

If you need to visit Employee Health, please call ahead so staff can plan for your arrival.

Excessive heat warning

An excessive heat warning will be in effect for Maricopa County starting at 10 a.m. Wednesday and running through Saturday. Temperatures could top 110 by the end of the week.



Human Resources services available

Human Resources staff are available during regular business hours by phone and email. If any employee has a need to come into HR, to please call or email someone before coming in, as there are limited days and hours when staff are in the hospital. HR staff pledge to be responsive and make meetings as convenient as possible.

Community resources for health care workers

Many businesses in the community and across the country are providing resources/free services to assist health care professionals at this time. You can go to the Human Resources page on the Abrazo Intranet to see the latest updates to the list of businesses providing discounts and services.

Safe behaviors are more important now!

Although Arizona's stay at home order has expired, COVID-19 has not changed: It is highly infectious and has a potential for serious adverse effects. As such, we believe it's even more important now for Arizona residents to monitor themselves and choose to practice safe behaviors that have the potential to prevent a surge in COVID-19 infections in our state.

While our respective hospital systems have made the necessary adjustments to ensure we have capacity today to deal with the current outbreak, as more residents return to their normal lives, we could see a spike in hospitalizations in a month or two if safe behaviors aren't practiced.

The good news is that Arizona has dramatically ramped up testing and many county health departments are developing strong contact tracing programs. Hospitals and health care professionals have learned much about the virus and are better prepared to treat those infected.

That said, even under the most thoughtful and gradual re-opening plans, the real key to a safe recovery are the decisions you will make in the weeks ahead to continue to protect yourself and your loved ones.

Many salons and restaurants have already reopened with safe distancing precautions in place, and other businesses are following. The question is, will you try to return to "life as usual" absent safe practices or will you take steps to protect yourself and others from the spread of COVID-19?

As collaborating patient care leaders of the region's major health systems that have experienced the challenges and heart-break of caring for thousands of sick and dying COVID-19 disease patients, we can't urge you enough to continue practicing safe behaviors that have been proven to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. If you leave home, here are some precautions and actions you can take that are effective:

- Do not leave your home if you are ill except to receive medical care.
- Wear a mask when you're in public near others.
- Stay six feet away from others.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Wipe down surfaces that may be infected.

Of course, it may be very tempting for some or many to go back to the "good old days" before COVID-19. Keep in mind, though, the risks of the pandemic have not disappeared. The best advice for now is to err on the side of caution – if you choose to go out, be informed about the risks and take the appropriate measures to protect yourself, your loved ones and those around you.

We would also like to remind everyone to please seek care when you need it. Our community should be reassured that Arizona hospitals and emergency departments are safe places. Emergency departments are open, and one should not be afraid to seek help because of the pandemic. Delays in care can have a significant detrimental effect on your well-being.

By working together, we can reduce the number of infections and deaths and keep our hospitals in a constant state of readiness to care for patients during the next phase of the pandemic.

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