

Arizona COVID-19 cases

The Arizona Department of Health Services has reported 234,906 positive COVID-19 cases and 152,101 cases in Maricopa County as of Oct. 22, 2020. Out of the 1,979,581 COVID-19 tests completed to date in Arizona, 9.8% have tested positive for the virus. Percent positive is the number of people with a positive test result, out of all the people COVID-19 tested completed in Arizona.

In Maricopa County, 13,063 patients (9%) have been admitted to a hospital and 1,434 (1%) admitted to an ICU since the county began collecting data on Jan. 22.

Message from Dr. Ellert: Protecting yourself and your patients

I want to start by thanking everyone for the high quality of care given to our shared patients. It is also important, however, that we care for one another and for ourselves. I want to focus this communication on the importance of providing high quality support to one another and to yourself. Healthcare is definitely a high-stress job. Please remember to take time to relax, be present to and for your family, exercise, eat healthily, and create balance in your life.

I want to remind everyone about staying safe in the hospital. As you recall, we put many policies and procedures in place to keep all of us safe during the pandemic. Everyone rallied to the cause and during our peak surge the rate of staff and employees sick with COVID-19 remained relatively low. As I have walked through the hospitals, however, I have noticed that the rigor by which we are adhering to the protocols established to keep all of us safe has become a little lax at times. I want to make a few points as a friendly reminder:

- Do not relax your protocols simply because someone has tested negative. Please remember that there is a 14 day window after someone has been exposed that they can turn positive. Also, all of the current tests have a significant false negative rate. Some implications for this are:
 - **Always** wear an N-95 mask when doing any aerosolizing procedure (intubations, CPR, nebulizer treatments).
 - **Always** wear eye protection when caring for patients and when around anybody who does not have a mask.
 - Wear an *approved* mask in all patient care areas (cloth masks and mask with an expiration valve are NOT approved for patient care areas).
- Maintain social distancing when you must remove your mask. This is extremely important in break-rooms, the cafeteria, and other similar venues. Maintaining social distancing when in common-areas such as these where you are not wearing a mask includes not gathering or sitting in groups.
- Meticulous hand-washing is extremely important. Remind one another to do this!
- As we have more and more visitors in our facilities please ensure that they are adhering to our masking and social distancing guidelines.
- Please ensure that patients are educated about the importance of social distancing and/or masking when they are in proximity to other patients, visitors, or any public place within the hospital. Please ensure that they are also following hand hygiene guidelines.
- PLEASE get your flu shot. While we combat COVID-19 we want to keep the risk of flu at a minimum. I would love to see us minimally at 90% by November 1, 2020.

As you may have noticed, we have had a slight increase in the number of COVID-19 patients in the last week. At our peak on July 8th we had 309 confirmed positive cases in our Tenet Hospitals in Arizona. By September 20th we reached our lowest number after the surge of 15 confirmed cases. We are currently back up to a total of 36 confirmed cases and 22 PUIs. As healthcare professionals I would encourage each of you to set the example for our community by maintaining social distancing and by wearing a mask when in public situations where you will be in contact with others. One web site that I find very useful is Rt.live (<https://rt.live/>). This site provides you with an indicator of the risk of transmission in our state. When the Rt value is below 1 the risk of transmission is low. When it is above 1 the virus will spread quickly. Our Rt value today is 1.12. On July 17th our Rt value had gotten as low as 0.82. On September 10th our Rt value had reach 1.0 and it has been on the rise since. I think this is very indicative of the fact that when the number of infections go down, people tend to become lax and we ultimately pay the price with increased admissions of sick patients a few days later.

Again, I want to thank you for everything that you do. Please keep safe and please keep those around you safe.

PTO transition update reminder

Please contact a member of the HR team know if you have any questions about the information below regarding PTO policy changes:

- **Deadline to use PTO “new hours.”** We will extend the deadline to use PTO “new hours” (hours accrued after February 1, 2020) from December 31, 2020 through September 30, 2021. This provides you with an additional nine months to use any time accrued, but unused this year. The expiration date for use of PTO “old hours” (hours accrued prior to February 1, 2020) remains unchanged through June 30, 2022. There will not be any further extensions to the deadlines.
- **“Special” sell back event.** We have decided to hold an additional “special” sell back event in November where employees can sell up to one week of their PTO “old hours”. To encourage participation, we have increased the sell back value from 50% to 75% for this “special” sell back event only.

We appreciate the feedback received and hope the above actions provide additional support in using your PTO. Thank you again for your hard work during the pandemic and every day as you serve our patients.

Abrazo in the news

Abrazo has been in the news recently and we’re always looking for good story ideas! Click on the links below for recent media coverage:

[ER doctor offers Halloween safety tips during pandemic](#)

[New Abrazo Surprise Hospital treats first patients](#)

[Abrazo Surprise Hospital sees 1st patients](#)

[Abrazo West adds two medical residencies](#)

[Understanding your risks for breast cancer](#)

Do you have news to share? Talk with your manager or supervisor, who can contact Communications Manager Keith Jones for follow up. The information may be used for a press release, media story or internal communication.

Wellbeing resources on Abrazo intranet



The Intranet home page now includes a link to a downloadable “Abrazo Wellbeing Resources” brochure. The booklet offers numerous resources for stress and anxiety management, dealing with grief and loss, suicide prevention and more. Log into the Intranet then click on the icon on the home page to access the brochure.

Incident Command email

Do you have a suggestion or feedback related to the hospital’s pandemic response? Please email questions or suggestions to IncidentCommand@abrazohealth.com. Your message will be routed to the appropriate person to evaluate and respond.