



MEMORANDUM

Date: November 15, 2021

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Lesker *Jan*
Chief Deputy County Administrator

Re: **Second COVID-19 Update for the November 16, 2021 Board of Supervisors Meeting**

Pandemic Update

Cases continue to grow across the state and Pima County. Per the State's data dashboard this county experienced a single day peak of 631 cases on November 9. Overall we continue to have week over week case growth since the week of October 10 when we reported 1,689. Last week 2,739 cases were reported. At this point we are experiencing more cases than our peak during the summer surge in 2020 and certainly numbers consistent with the onset of the last year's holiday surge. (Attachment 1) Please note these estimates are likely to be revised upwards.

Diagnostic testing for COVID-19 has also been growing steadily. Last week the State reported that 30,819 diagnostic tests performed in Pima County with a positivity rate of 12 percent. This represents 15.4 percent of all the diagnostic testing being performed across the state. In general testing is widely available and continues to increase during this surge as would be expected with 32,327 tests performed last week and an elevated positivity rate of 11 percent. This is compared to 2 percent positivity rate during the prior low point the last week of May. (Attachment 2)

Notably 92,000 self-administered rapid antigen tests have been distributed by the Health Department in the last three months for distribution in schools, community organizations, first-responders and, most recently, in partnership with the Pima County Library. Positives arising from self-administered rapid antigen testing are being voluntarily reported to and acted upon by the Health Department, although these results do not yet appear on the state testing website.

Intensive care capacity continues to be extremely constrained across Pima County. On November 14, 2021 hospitals reported 4 percent adult ICU bed availability, with 25 percent of ICU beds currently in use by COVID-19 patients.

Public Health Advisory

The Health Department has published a Public Health Advisory to reflect the current state of the pandemic. (Attachment 3) It clarifies that the Pfizer vaccine product is now widely available and recommended for all children age 5 and older. Additionally, booster vaccinations are increasingly available to all adults, and the Health Department recommends that fully

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vaccinated people avail themselves of this additional protection. Finally, it reminds the public (adults and children 5 and older) that correct mask use in indoor public spaces continues to be recommended for every one regardless of immunization status. That along with staying home and away from work or school when ill, continue to be common sense advice that we all should heed.

Vaccination

As of November 15, per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 70 percent of Pima County residents who are 12 years of age or older have been fully vaccinated with two doses of Moderna/Pfizer or a single dose of Johnson & Johnson. Significantly, 60.5 percent of the *entire* population of Pima County has now been vaccinated. This compares very favorably with 54 percent of Arizonans and 58.8 percent of all Americans.

Conclusion

This continues to be a very dynamic situation and I will provide an update to the Board on a needed. Our strategy remains to emphasize vaccination (including boosters) and testing, as the best way to overcome the current pandemic surge.


JKL/dym

Attachments

- c: Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,
Health and Community Services
- Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
- Terry Cullen, MD, MS, Public Health Director, Health Department

ATTACHMENT 1

Pima County COVID -19 Cases as reported by the Arizona State Department of Health Services and available on their website on November 15, 2021.

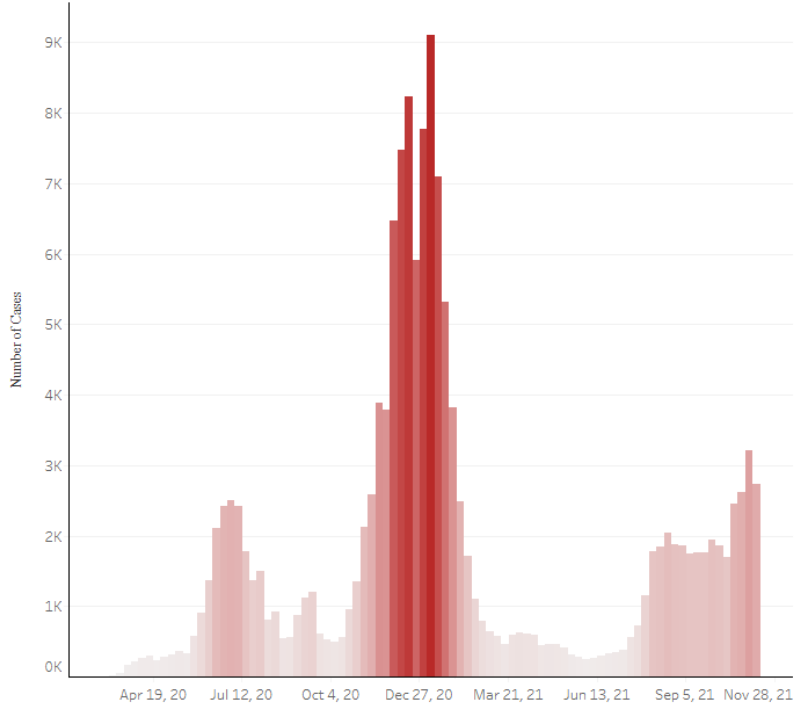
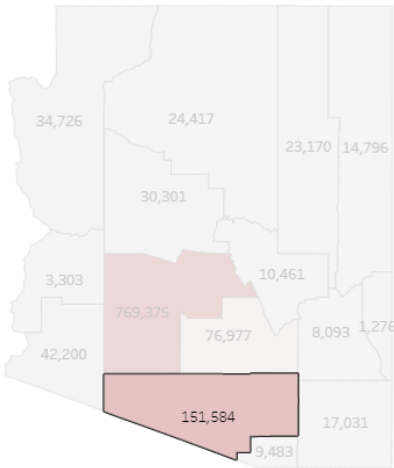
Data currently shown for **All Time**
 Date updated: 11/15/2021
 Select time frame: **All Time** Last 6 Months
 Hover for more information 

What is an Epi Curve?

An epi curve is a visual display of cases associated with an outbreak by a specific date. In the graph below, the date of specimen collection is used as the date.

Epi Curves may be used to describe an outbreak's time trend or distribution of cases over time, the general sense of the outbreaks' magnitude, and the most likely time period of exposure.

Click below to filter data by county of residence.



*Illnesses in the last 4-7 days may not be reported yet

ATTACHMENT 2

Pima County Diagnostic COVID -19 Testing as reported by the Arizona State Department of Health Services and available on their website on November 15, 2021.

Data currently shown for **All Time**
Date updated: 11/15/2021

Select a timeframe **All Time** Last 6 Months

Hover for more information



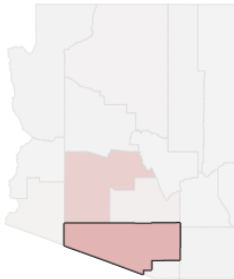
This page displays the number of tests conducted. One person may be tested multiple times or with multiple tests.

Diagnostic tests completed for COVID-19
2,247,612

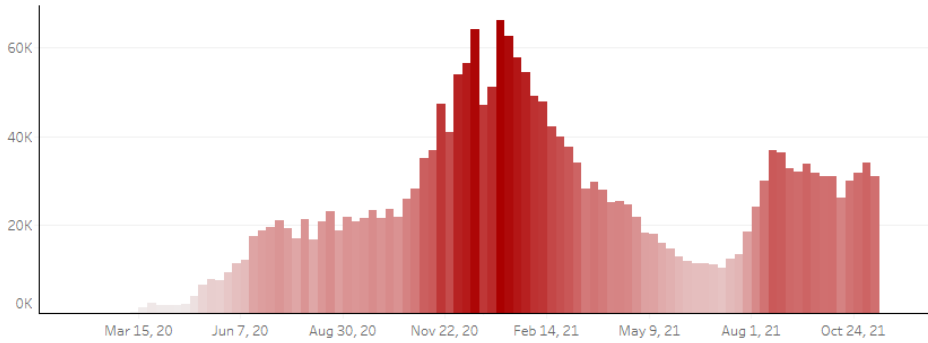
Diagnostic tests reported today in Arizona
6,039

Total % Positive COVID-19 Diagnostic Tests
7.9%

Diagnostic tests by county
Select a county to filter the data.



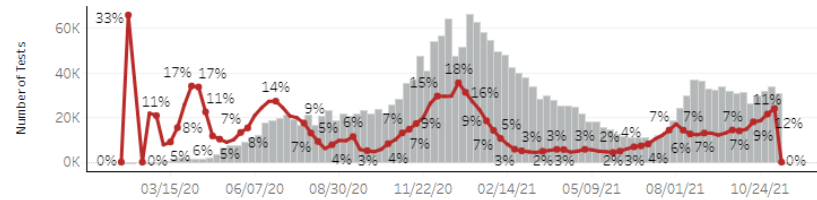
Diagnostic tests by date of collection



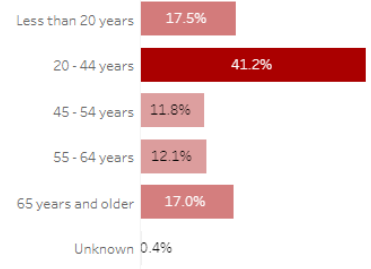
Total % Positive COVID-19 Diagnostic Tests: **7.9%**

■ COVID-19 tests completed and ■ Percent positive by week

Percent positive is the number of positive tests in Electronic Laboratory Reporting (ELR), out of all COVID-19 tests reported via ELR. Diagnostic tests include PCR and antigen testing.



Diagnostic Testing by Age Group



*NOTE: Results from the last 4-7 days may not be reported yet.

ATTACHMENT 3



Public Health Advisory Update COVID-19

Updated November 15, 2021

The Pima County Health Department (PCHD) is committed to ensuring that our community can safely resume the variety of activities previously experienced before the pandemic. This Public Health Advisory (PHA) provides an 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.

Pima County COVID-19 Mitigation Measures

Vaccination

- PCHD **strongly recommends** that parents/guardians consider vaccinating all age-eligible children as soon as possible.
- Anyone 5 years or older can receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. Further information on vaccine availability is at www.pima.gov/covid19vaccine.
- Pima County-sponsored vaccination sites will be making boosters available to anyone over 18, six months from their second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or two months since their single shot of Johnson & Johnson.

School and Childcare Settings

- PCHD **strongly recommends** that all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools always wear masks indoors during school regardless of vaccination status, consistent with current CDC guidance.
- The school dashboard indicates that Pima County has high transmission as of this date; data is available at <https://www.azdhs.gov/covid19/index.php#schools-dashboard>.

Face coverings

- PCHD **strongly recommends** that all Pima County residents 5 and older (including fully vaccinated individuals) wear masks in public indoor settings.
- PCHD **strongly recommends** that all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools wear masks indoors at all times during school regardless of vaccination status.
- Fully vaccinated as well as unvaccinated residents and employees of correctional facilities, homeless shelters, congregate living facilities and health care facilities or people on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and in transportation hubs such as airports, bus, train or other transit stations **should continue to wear a mask**.

Testing

- People who are symptomatic with COVID-19 symptoms should test for COVID-19.
- Close contacts to confirmed positives, regardless of vaccination status, should test for COVID-19 on day 5-7 after contact. Further information is available at www.pima.gov/covid19testing.
- At-home self-test kits are available. Please see www.pima.gov/covid19testing for further details.

Other Mitigation Strategies

- With the upcoming holidays please do the following:
 - Celebrate outdoors to help limit transmission of COVID-19.
 - Wear face masks indoors.
 - Travel safely by testing before your trip, wear a mask and wash hands regularly.

- PCHD recommends the following mitigation measures be continued by all:
 - Get vaccinated and boosted if you have not yet done so.
 - Stay home when sick with a fever, cough, or other COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or fabric or, into their sleeve or elbow (not into hands).
 - Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer.
 - Avoid poorly ventilated and crowded spaces.

Therapeutics

- Combination monoclonal antibody therapies have limited availability in Pima County under Emergency Use Authorization. Information is available www.pima.gov/covid19mab and <https://www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/statement-on-bamlanivimab-plus-etesevimab-eua/>.

Reporting

- Reporting of confirmed and suspected cases of COVID-19 to the **Pima County Health Department** continues to be required for schools, businesses, and government entities if individuals test positive for COVID-19 and were present in the workplace or school within the 48 hours prior to onset of symptoms or testing.

What We Know

Pima County is experiencing a significant increase with cases increasing approximately 30% over the last 30 days. Pima County has been in a state of high transmission since August 2021. We are experiencing additional acceleration of cases with over 305 cases/100K as of November 11, 2021. There have been over 150,000 COVID-19 cases diagnosed in Pima County as of November 10, 2021, an increase of over 34,000 since July 1. More than 2,790 deaths have been attributed to COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic. Pima County is also experiencing decreased availability of hospital beds over the last three weeks. There is continued increase in cases in K-12 schools. Schools have reported over 4,600 cases since July 20, 2021, including over 140 outbreaks. These cases account for about 15% of our reported cases, compared to 4% of total cases during the last school year. Over 90 classrooms have been closed due to COVID. Significant community and individual adherence to mitigation recommendations, as well as high vaccination rates, have been demonstrated to decrease serious illness and death.

Vaccination

- As of November 12, 2021, nearly 69.5% of the population 12 or older is fully vaccinated. More than 89.2% of people 65 and over are fully vaccinated.
- **In October, approximately 76% of all COVID cases occurred among individuals who were unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated.**
- Since the beginning of the pandemic, only 198 fully vaccinated people required hospitalization.

County Response Priorities for 2021

Pima County supports a strong community recovery and is committed to:

- Continuing to ensure COVID-19 testing and vaccine availability at no cost throughout the community.
- Advancing health equity and access to services for our diverse community.
- Enhancing public health infrastructure.
- Increasing engagement with Pima County residents.
- Supporting 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. 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.