



MEMORANDUM

Date: January 26, 2022

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

From: Jan Lesher *Jan Lesher*
Acting County Administrator

Re: **Response to the Board of Supervisors' January 18, 2022 question regarding "COVID services in Ajo"**

During the January 18, 2022 meeting the Board Chair asked for information of COVID related services provided in the unincorporated community of Ajo in far western Pima County, and specifically the role of Desert Senita Community Health Center and the Pima County Health Department in the provision of these services.

To review the impact of the pandemic on this small community and for the purpose of this analysis, we used the geographic boundaries of the 85321 zip code which covers the entirety of Ajo and surrounding communities. Based on this we can say with a high degree of confidence (using the State's own data) that there have been 648 COVID-19 cases and 13 deaths within those geographic boundaries. Moreover, a total of 6,474 vaccinations administered to the 3,577 members of that community.

COVID-19 Service Delivery in the Greater Ajo Area (zip code 85321)

COVID-19	Desert Senita Community Health Center (CY 20 & 21)	Pima County Health Department	Arizona State Health Department
Tests	1,464	1,260	6,025
Diagnoses	259	--	648
Vaccinations	4,007	65	6,474

Desert Senita testing data comes from the federal Health Resource Services Administration report (and is subject to federal audit by that entity). Additionally, Desert Senita vaccine data comes from the State of Arizona Department of Health Services AIISES data base.

The impact of having a federally qualified community health center operating in the Ajo area has been critical during this pandemic. Nearly 67 percent of COVID-19 vaccinations in that community have been provided by Desert Senita. Likewise, 24 percent of COVID-19 tests in that zip code have been performed at Desert Senita, and 40 percent of COVID-19 diagnoses in the area were made at that facility. Until last summer the vast majority of testing performed had been PCR, with its inherent multi-day delay in results. Since that time, Desert Senita has brought on additional rapid antigen point-of-care testing with the Abbott IDNow product providing results within 20 minutes. Supply chain constraints however have not allowed broader expansion of rapid testing, and the facility has yet to receive its allotment of self-administered antigen tests from the federal government. Finally beginning next month, Desert Senita will be hosting community vaccinations events every other Saturday to enhance booster accessibility.

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The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors

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The original August 2020 Pima County Health Department testing deployment done in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) in Ajo resulted in 60 tests. This has been followed by the distribution of 960 self-administered rapid antigen kits to the Ajo Unified School District. Earlier this week 100 self-administered COVID-19 test kits were delivered to the Ajo Public Library for community distribution. This was the second such allocation, 140 test kits were distributed by our branch in December 2021. Planned Health Department activity in the near future includes two rapid antigen testing dates on January 29 and 30, as well as a vaccination clinics on January 30, February 9 and 16. (Attachment)

Rural and remote areas like Ajo, which seemed to be initially protected in the pandemic, have emerged as critical areas of vulnerability due to a lack of easy access to testing, treatment and vaccination. We continue to redouble our efforts and work with partners on the ground to deliver critical services in this setting and other rural communities in Pima County.

JL/dym

Attachment

c: Francisco Garcia, 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
Amber Mathewson, Director, Library District

THIS WEEKEND

FREE COVID-19 TESTING & VACCINES

Ajo Community Center

290 5th Street Ajo, AZ 85321

TESTING: January 29th & 30th 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

VACCINES: January 30, Noon-4 p.m.

**On-site registration. Results in 15 minutes.
For boosters, bring your vaccination card.**



PIMA COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ESTE FIN DE SEMANA

**PRUEBAS Y
VACUNAS
COVID-19
GRATIS**

Ajo Community Center

290 5th Street Ajo, AZ 85321

PRUEBAS: 29 y 30 de enero, de 8 a.m. a las 4 p.m.

VACUNAS: 30 de enero, de 12 p.m. a las 4 p.m.

**Regístrese aquí y obtenga resultados en 15 minutos.
Para su refuerzo, traiga la tarjeta de vacunación.**



PIMA COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT