



MEMORANDUM

Date: September 3, 2021

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

From: C.H. Huckelberry *[Signature]*
County Administrator

Re: **COVID-19 Update for the September 7, 2021 Board of Supervisors Meeting**

Weekly COVID-19 case numbers appear to be plateauing in Pima County at approximately 1,822 cases last week. Overall COVID-19 testing has increased during this surge, however test positivity remains high at 8 percent compared to our nadir of 3 percent in May and early June of this year. Overall COVID-19 hospitalizations are also beginning to trend in the right direction. However, we remain cautiously vigilant, since we have not yet experienced the full impact of the return to school for public school districts nor the resumption of campus life at the University of Arizona and Pima College.

School Update

The Pima County Health Department works collaboratively with schools and districts to quickly identify cases occurring in these environments. From July 20 of this year until August 30, 239 schools have reported 1,413 cases to the Health Department. (Attachment 1) Of these, students represent 86.6 percent of the reported cases, while teachers and staff represent the remaining 13.3 percent.

Non-vaccine eligible children up to 11 years of age represent 47.5 percent (671) of school reported cases, while the 12 to 19 year age group makes up the 38.9 percent (550) of school reported cases.

Since the beginning of the school year there have been 54 school outbreaks (using the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) definition of 2 or more epidemiologically linked cases not in the same household) and these have resulted in 30 separate classroom closures. Nearly all public school districts are impacted largely in proportion to the size of their student population. As such Tucson, Marana, Vail and Amphitheatre school districts have the largest number of cases. If all private and charter schools were reported as a single district or group, they would rank third in terms of the number of cases being reported. To date 6 school districts have implemented masking requirements, and one continues remote learning only.

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Hospital Capacity

Our Health Department monitors hospital capacity on a daily basis, by calling each facility within the jurisdiction to assess current volumes in the inpatient medical surgical units and in intensive care. This voluntary self-reporting by our partner hospitals has been invaluable for the regional management of precious hospital resources.

Hospital capacity and in particular staffed intensive care beds continue to be constrained across the county. In fact, ICU bed availability has been at just under 5 percent for the last 30 days. This is due to a variety of factors including staffing and higher than seasonal levels of hospitalization, but is certainly exacerbated by the current surge of COVID-19 patients. As of yesterday, intensive care bed use by COVID-19 patients accounts for 21 percent of all ICU patients, which is slightly lower (down from 25 percent) during our last update.

It bears emphasizing that hospital resources devoted to the COVID-19 response continue to be consumed predominantly by the unvaccinated. Based on our current assessment more than 98 percent of hospitalized COVID-19 patients were lacking the protection provided by full vaccination. Likewise, 99 percent of COVID-19 related deaths since January were among unvaccinated individuals. Vaccination remains the key to personal protection and to the safeguarding of our hospital resources.

Vaccine Coverage

Vaccination in Pima County continues to be a bright spot. At this point we continue to have higher vaccination coverage rates compared to the rest of the state and the nation. As documented by the CDC COVID-19 Data Tracker, 665,460 (63.5 percent) Pima County residents have received at least a single dose of vaccine, and 577,167 (55.1 percent) have been fully vaccinated. Notably vaccine coverage among adults, which has been the national benchmark, is now well in excess of the 73.4 percent for a single dose and 63.7 percent for complete vaccination. First dose coverage now exceeds 67 percent across all age groups, except for 10 to 14 (31 percent), 15 to 19 (54 percent), and 20 to 29 (51 percent). (Attachment 2)

COVID-19 Testing

Pima County has since the beginning of the pandemic invested in the development and expansion of testing capacity across this community to ensure that cost and geographic accessibility do not pose barriers for our residents to access these services. To date we have facilitated or funded more than 440,831 tests. This has enabled our Health Department's case investigation and contact tracing process, and contributed to creating safer work and school environments.

The federal testing framework evolved as has the science, and the CDC is increasingly recommending rapid antigen tests and nucleic acid amplification tests for COVID-19. This is largely due to the rapid processing time which leads quick results to inform the actions of the patient and public health. Such tests are now being made available through the Health Department to schools and districts for use with the students and families they serve. Much of this testing allocation is coming from the federal government through the State and directly to these entities, but robustly supplemented with more than 35,850 tests that the County has provided to our school partners.

In response to increase demand among the community and diminished availability in health care settings, last week the Health Department and its contractor PMG, stood up free low-barrier rapid antigen testing capacity on site at our Abrams location. That site is scheduled to operate Tuesday through Saturday (1 PM to 8 PM). Additional rapid testing, also becomes available this week through our contractor Paradigm (at its East Grant location (daily 9 AM to 5 PM) and expanding Monday to its Liberty Plaza (Tuesdays and Wednesdays) and Tucson Electric Power (TEP) (Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Sunday). Combined, these testing sites are able to meet the increased demand for testing that we are experiencing as part of this surge. Such efforts will be scaled back as demand and infection rates decline.

Conclusion

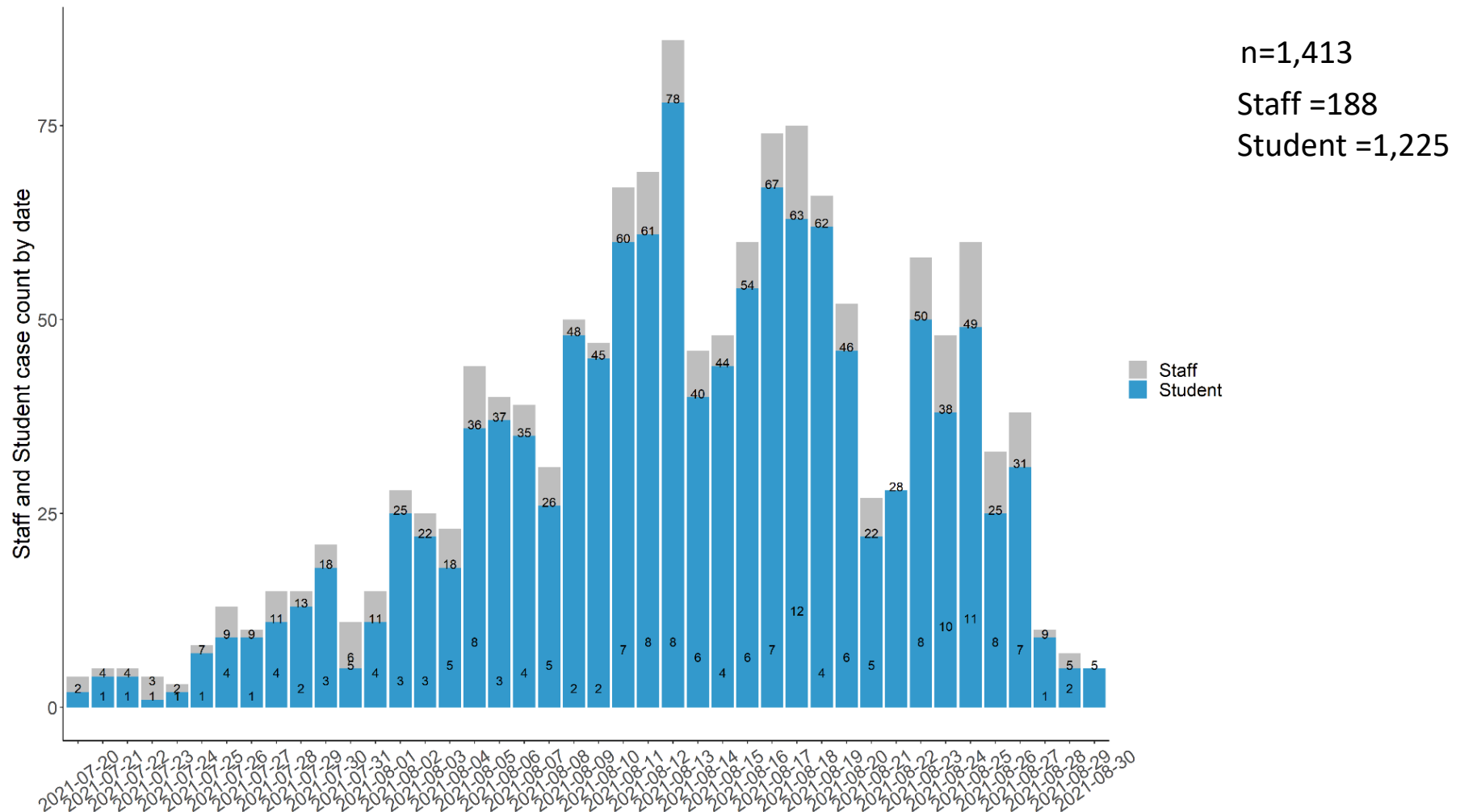
Pima County is positioned well to respond to the current surge. We remain nimble in our approach to the pandemic, and continue to focus on expanding vaccination and testing to serve this community.

CHH/dym

Attachments

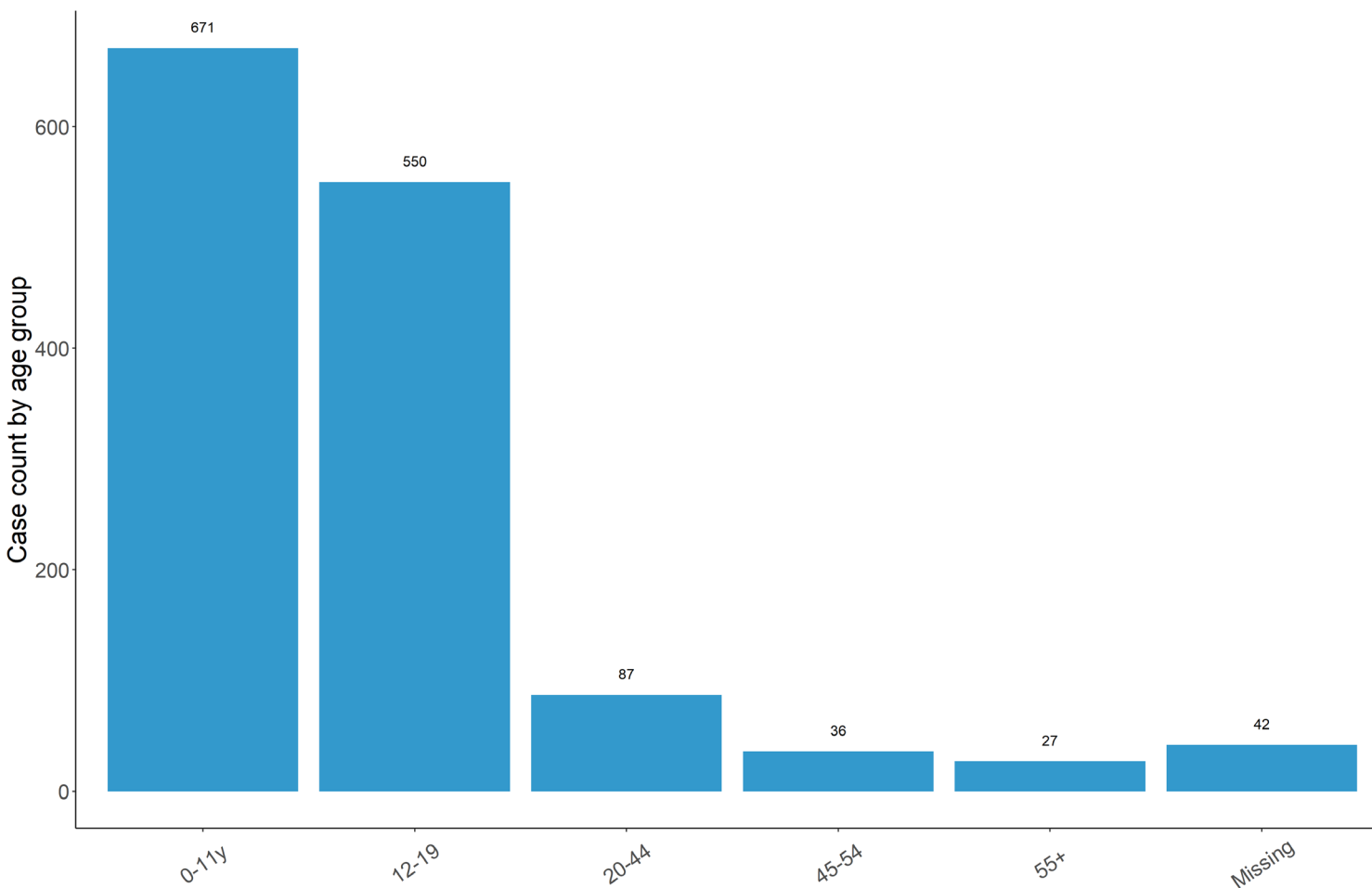
c: Jan Leshner, Chief Deputy County Administrator
Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,
Health and Community Services
Terry Cullen, MD, MS, Public Health Director, Health Department

ATTACHMENT 1



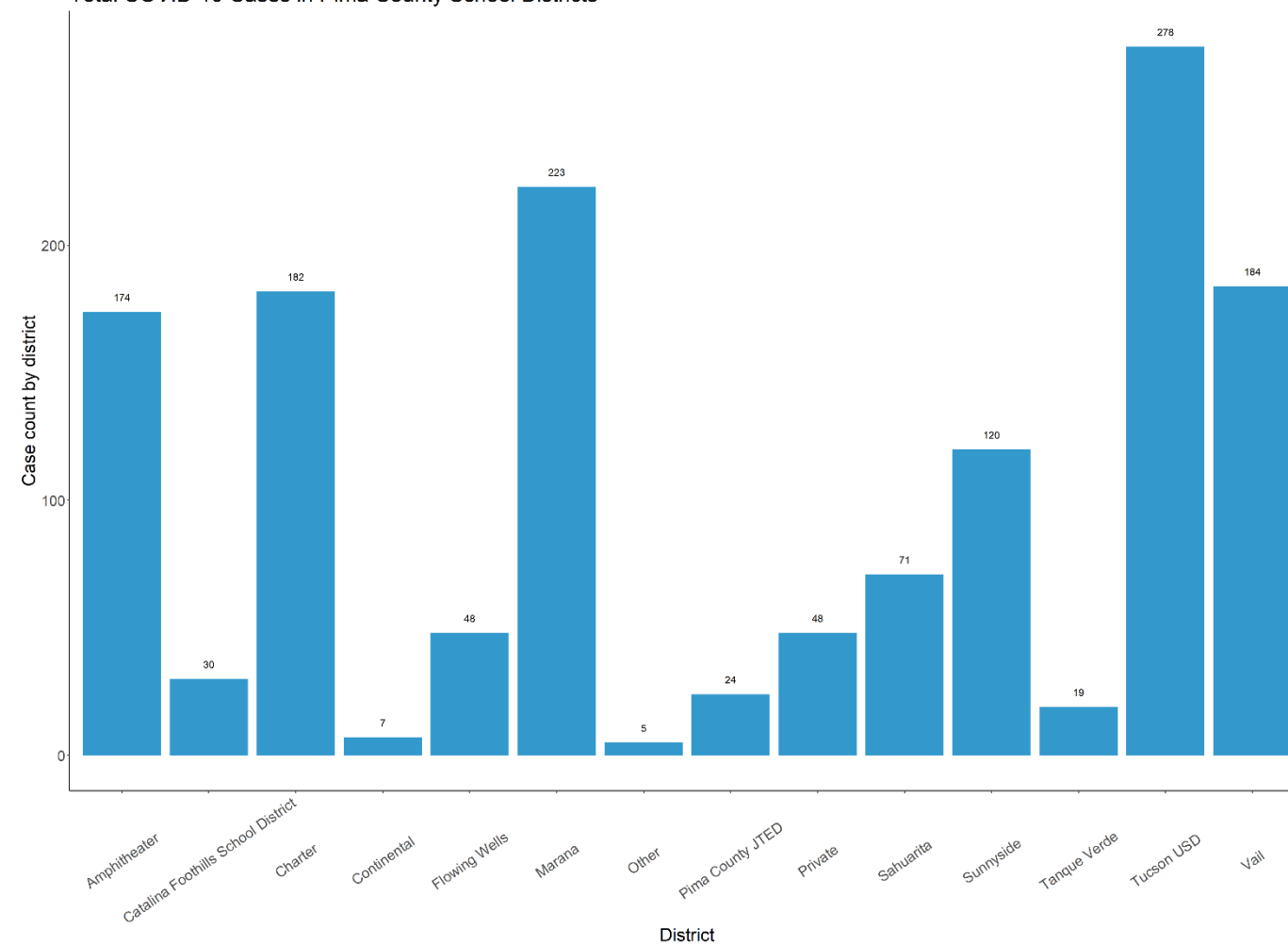
Total COVID-19 Cases in Schools

n=1,413



Total COVID-19 Cases in Pima County School Districts

n=1,413



Tests provided to Schools – 08/20/2021*

School	# Tests Received *
Vail School District	2440
Tucson Unified School District	16000
Amphitheater Public Schools	2520
Continental School District	940
Flowing Wells Unified School District	1080
Tanque Verde Unified School District	400
The Edge School	80
Castlehill Country Day School	80
Sunnyside Unified School District	2600
Arizona State School for the Deaf and Blind	6120
Southside Community School	400
Accelerated Elementary and Secondary Schools	80
Desert Sky Community School	40
Pima Vocational High School	40
San Miguel High School	990
St Joseph Catholic School	40
CAPE School	80
Other (includes non-jurisdictional schools)	1920
Total	35,850

*This slide is updated once a week

ATTACHMENT 2

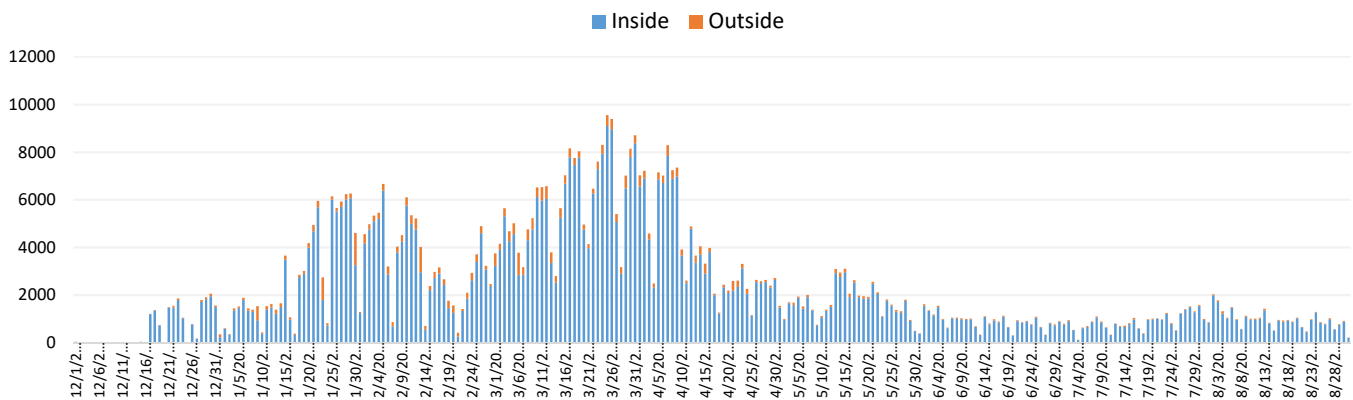
Pima County COVID-19 Vaccination Report

September 1, 2021

Total doses administered to Pima County residents: 1,188,528*

As of August 31, 2021, a total of 637,846 (61.06%) Pima County residents have received their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. A total of 598,854 residents were vaccinated by a local provider in Pima County ("inside") and 38,992 residents were vaccinated by a provider outside of the county ("outside"). Note, dates that don't appear in graphs had zero vaccinations. *Total number of vaccine doses administered to Pima County residents by all vaccine providers.

Pima County First Dose Vaccinations by Date and by Location of Service



First Time Vaccinated Residents by Gender and Age Group

	Number vaccinated	% of residents vaccinated	2019 pop. size	% of total pop.	% of age group
Residents vaccinated	637,846		1,044,675	61%	
Gender					
Female	345,282	54%	530,457	51%	
Male	291,167	46%	514,218	49%	
Unknown	1,397	0%			
Age group					
0-9	0	0%	118,576	11%	0%
10-14	19,047	3%	62,299	6%	31%
15 - 19	37,469	6%	69,243	7%	54%
20 - 29	83,336	13%	164,060	16%	51%
30 - 39	81,822	13%	122,736	12%	67%
40 - 49	79,478	12%	114,326	11%	70%
50 - 59	87,752	14%	121,325	12%	72%
60 - 69	108,697	17%	128,571	12%	85%
70 - 79	93,469	15%	93,065	9%	100%
80+	46,762	7%	50,474	5%	93%
Unknown	14	0%			0%