



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Arizona Medical Association Pleads With Arizonans During Unparalleled COVID-19 Surge

January 14, 2022 (Phoenix) — Arizona is in the midst of a historic surge in COVID-19 cases, and our entire healthcare system is buckling under the weight. As the leading organization representing Arizona physicians, **the Arizona Medical Association (ArMA) is asking for every Arizonan to help.** Vaccination, mitigation, and testing are the keys to protecting our most vulnerable and ensuring our healthcare system can provide optimal care.

COVID-19 vaccines and boosters are the best forms of protection. In addition to increasing our overall vaccination rate to get closer to herd immunity, the Arizona physician community is strongly recommending everyone comply with mitigation measures as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including social distancing, masking up in public, and staying home when you are sick. Every Arizonan has a crucial role to play in this pandemic; our neighbors, friends, and loved ones can only be kept safe if we work *collectively*.

“Over the course of the pandemic, we have faced many challenges; however, what we are up against today is unparalleled,” stated Miriam Anand, MD, ArMA President. “Experts are forecasting the current surge has not yet peaked, and our healthcare system cannot take much more. Patients could inevitably be turned away, unable to find the care they so desperately need. As physicians, we are working our absolute hardest to avoid this terrible scenario, but we cannot do it without the public’s help. Please, get vaccinated, get boosted, and follow the recommended mitigation guidelines.”

Data from the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) shows daily case counts more than doubled during the first week of the year when compared to the week prior. In fact, the state experienced an all-time high case count on January 5, 2022, with more than 19,000 cases **reported**. Of the Arizonans who sought COVID-19 tests within the last 14 days, over 30% tested positive, **according to Mayo Clinic**.

Arizona’s rapid influx of COVID-19 cases is placing a tremendous strain on our healthcare system. Hospitals’ emergency departments are facing record numbers of patient visits from individuals with or suspected to have COVID-19. The number of inpatient and intensive care unit (ICU) beds available is sparse. As of January 12, 2022, **95% of inpatient and ICU beds were occupied**; COVID-19 patients account for more than a third of occupied beds. Due to limited capacity and staffing, hospitals are being

forced in and out of crisis standards of care, meaning staff must make harrowing decisions about which patients they will be able to treat.

As medical professionals invested in Arizonans' health, we are pleading with the public to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, get boosted, and comply with the **mitigation measures recommended by the CDC**. The public can use the following resources to learn about COVID-19 vaccination, boosters, treatments, testing, and more:

- **ADHS' COVID-19 Vaccine Homepage:** find general vaccine information, registration, FAQs, and more
- **ADHS' COVID-19 Response Homepage:** find information on current guidance, testing, vaccines, treatments, and more
- **ADHS' COVID-19 Vaccine Locator:** find COVID-19 vaccines near you
- **ADHS' COVID-19 Testing Locator:** find COVID-19 testing locations near you
- **ADHS' COVID-19 Treatment Locator:** find COVID-19 treatments available near you
- **CDC's COVID-19 Guidance Homepage:** find the most recent updates on recommended mitigation measures, isolation guidance, and more

Arizona's physicians are dedicated to guiding their patients in making informed decisions about their personal health. We encourage anyone who has questions or concerns about their health to reach out to their doctor.

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About Arizona Medical Association

The Arizona Medical Association (ArMA) is the largest organization in the state representing the interests of all physicians. Since 1892, ArMA has been advancing patient care and providing its members with leadership, advocacy, education, and community. For more information, visit **www.AZmed.org** and follow ArMA on **Facebook**, **Twitter**, and **LinkedIn**.