

December 1, 2020

Dr. Cara Christ  
Director  
Arizona Department of Health Services

Dr. Christ,

As the clinical leaders of the major health systems in Arizona, we are increasingly concerned that widespread transmission of COVID in the state is likely to severely strain, and potentially outstrip, available healthcare resources within the coming 2-3 weeks.

Multiple predictive models included in Appendix have been reviewed by Arizona CMOs, and all are in agreement with data that shows we are approaching a life-threatening COVID-19 surge. Certain parts of the state are already at capacity.

We greatly appreciate the partnership and collaboration from your office to help us evenly distribute patients, and the additional funding and assistance provided to support health system staffing needs. Given rapidly rising case counts and increasing hospitalizations, staff exposure to community spread, and new genomic evidence suggesting more rapid transmission is occurring, we feel swift action is necessary. We want to prevent Arizona hospitals from reaching crisis levels of care, avoid preventable deaths from COVID and keep children in school. Mitigation efforts take at least 2 weeks to begin to have an effect as illustrated in Appendix Figure D.

We believe it is imperative that the Governor's office implement enforceable measures to limit the spread and save the lives of Arizonans. It is our strong recommendation that these should be put in place within the next 72 hours, remain in place for 30 days and then be reassessed.

- Stop indoor dining
- No gatherings >25 persons
  - encourage and support enforcement for local ordinances
  - reassess previously approved gatherings/permits
  - post restrictions in an easily identifiable location on municipality websites
- Stop group athletic activities, including club sports
- Bi-directional COVID-19 roadmap execution and enforcement—for reopenings and ***closings***
- Curfew after 10 pm

These additional efforts would be in conjunction with those mitigation efforts that we know work: masking, social distancing, washing hands, and staying home when ill.

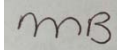
We have based these recommendations on a review of clinical evidence and recent meta-analysis of governmental actions that show these measures are highly effective in mitigating the spread of COVID-19 (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-020-01009-0>). Given the impending roll out of effective COVID-19 vaccines, we believe there is clear benefit that will come from avoiding illness and its long-term effects, despite the near-term hardships that these measures may cause.

A healthy workforce and population are essential ingredients for a strong economic recovery. If fewer Arizonans are infected with COVID-19, we believe the state's financial prosperity can rebound more quickly and we can collectively return to a more normal lifestyle. While some individuals may choose to ignore restrictions, the majority will follow the rules without an elaborate enforcement mechanism. Strong messaging from the Governor's office and ADHS will create a sense of urgency.

Please help us, as the healthcare leaders of your state, to bridge this gap until the vaccine can be widely available to the public. This has been a long road for us all, but there is hope on the horizon.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marjorie Bessel  
Chief Clinical Officer  
Banner Health



Dr. Rick Anderson  
Chief Medical Officer  
Tucson Medical Center

Dr. Keith Frey  
Chief Medical Officer - Arizona Division  
Dignity Health



Dr. Michael White  
Executive Vice President, Chief Clinical Officer  
Valleywise Health



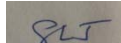
Dr. Mark Carroll  
Chief Medical Officer  
Health Choice Arizona



Dr. Anthony Torres  
Chief Medical Officer  
Yavapai Regional Medical Center



Dr. Stephanie Jackson  
Senior Vice President, Chief Clinical Value  
Officer  
Honor Health



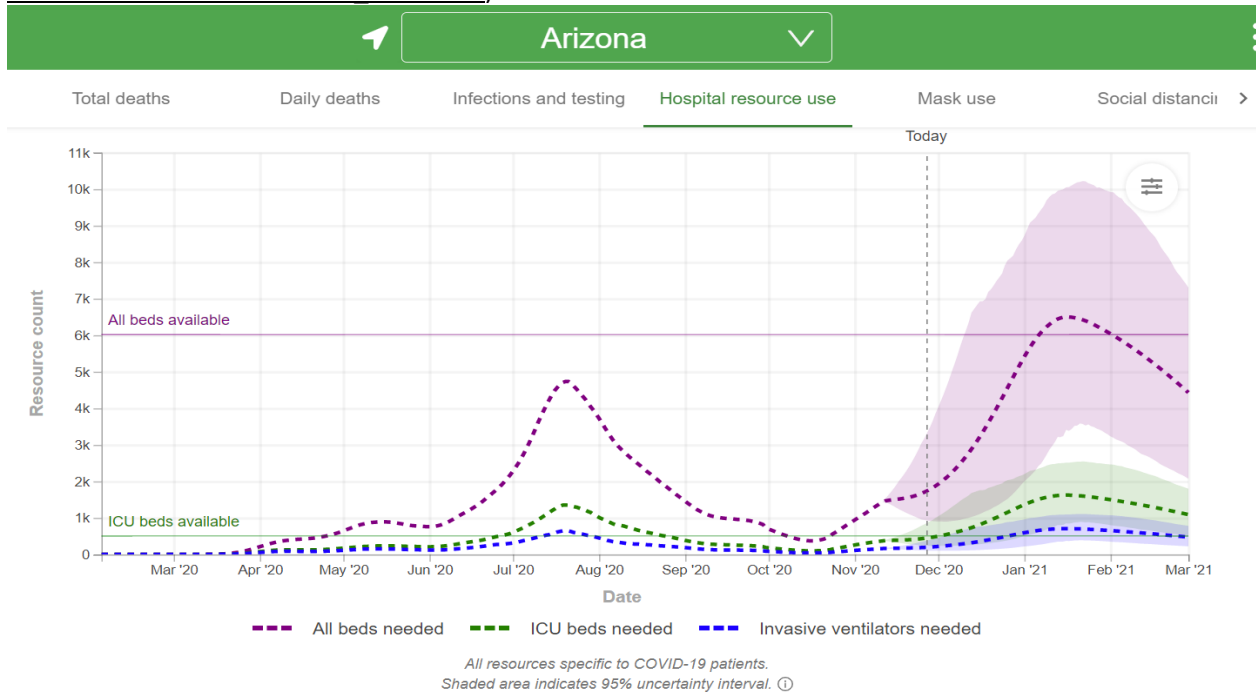
Dr. Alyssa Chapital  
Hospital Medical Director  
Mayo Clinic



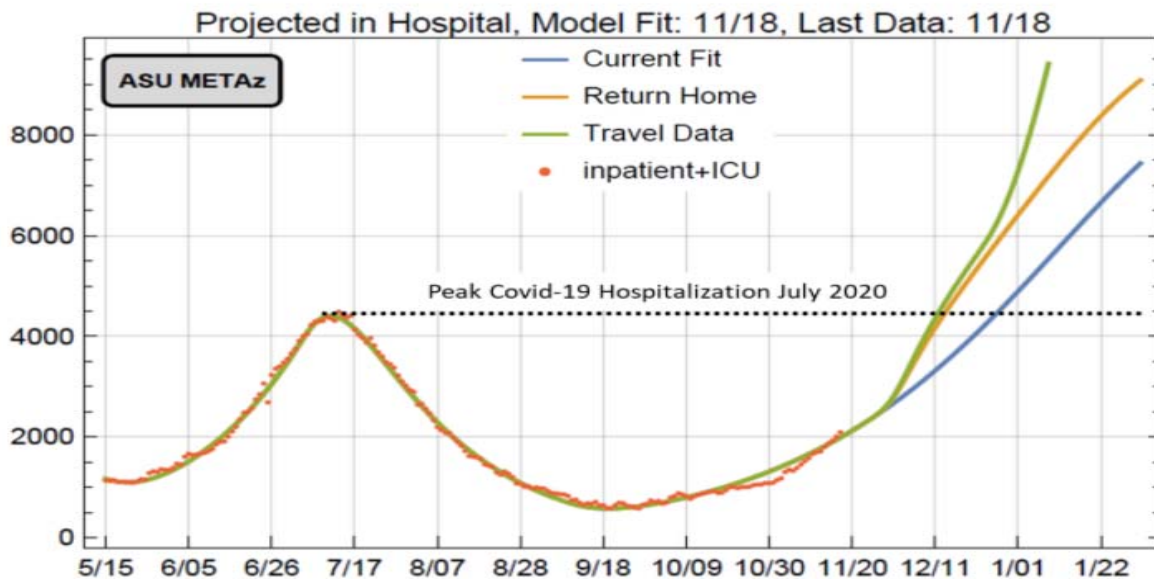
## Appendix

**Figure A:** IHME forecast showing that ICU bed capacity will be exceeded mid-December.

IHME 11/27/20 8am ([https://covid19.healthdata.org/United-States-of-America/Arizona?view=resource-use&tab=trend&resource=all resources](https://covid19.healthdata.org/United-States-of-America/Arizona?view=resource-use&tab=trend&resource=all%20resources))

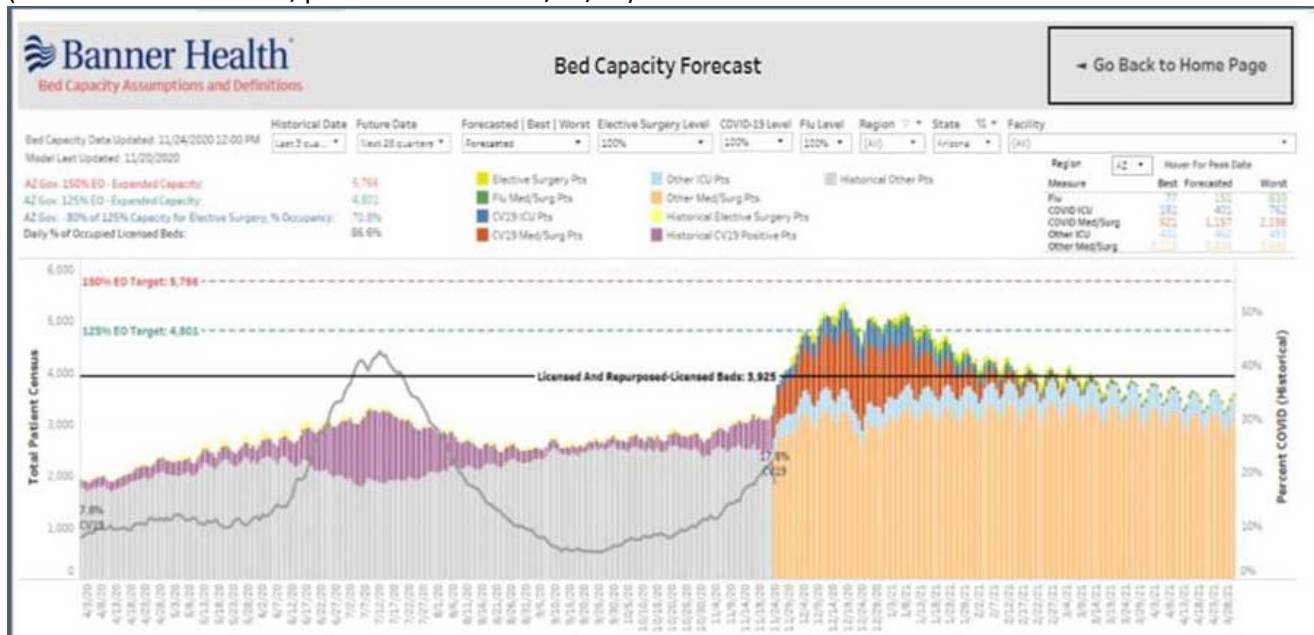


**Figure B:** ASU forecast model shows we will far exceed July peak hospitalization numbers by mid-December. (<https://publichealth.arizona.edu/news/2020/covid-19-forecast-model>)



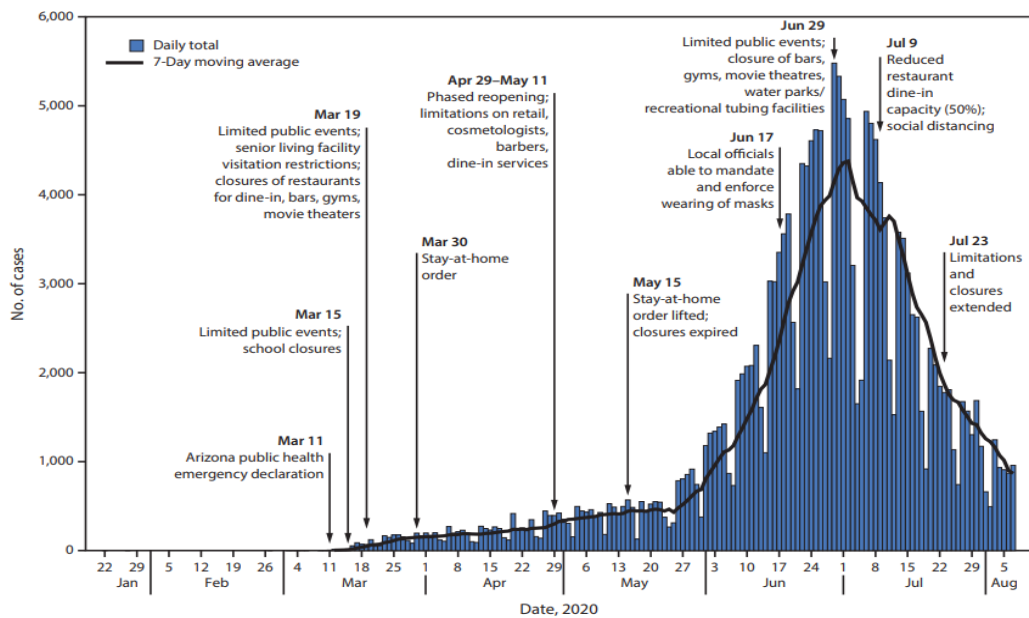
**Figure 11. ASU Covid-19 Modeling Group Estimate of Total Covid-19 Hospitalization in Arizona through January 21st. Produced by Esma Gel, PhD, Megan Jehn, PhD, Anna Muldoon MPH, Health Ross, PhD, DNP, ANP-BC, and Tim Lant, PhD, MAS.**

**Figure C:** Banner Health forecast model shared at a press conference last week shows piercing through 125% occupancy between 12/2/20 – 1/18-21. Additional forecasting from CommonSpirit Health confirms these concerning trends. (Banner Health forecast, press conference 11/24/20)



**Figure D:** AZ mitigation efforts take at least 2 weeks to begin, as shown in publication *Trends in COVID-19 Incidence After Implementation of Mitigation Measures — Arizona, January 22–August 7, 2020*, MMWR, Vol. 69/No. 40, October 9, 2020 ([https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/pdfs/mm6940e3-H.pdf?ACSTrackingID=USCDC\\_921-DM39921&ACSTrackingLabel=MMWR%20Early%20Release%20-%20Vol.%2069%2C%20October%206%2C%202020&deliveryName=USCDC\\_921-DM39921](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/pdfs/mm6940e3-H.pdf?ACSTrackingID=USCDC_921-DM39921&ACSTrackingLabel=MMWR%20Early%20Release%20-%20Vol.%2069%2C%20October%206%2C%202020&deliveryName=USCDC_921-DM39921))

FIGURE. Selected community mitigation measures\* and COVID-19 case counts† and 7-day moving averages‡ — Arizona, January 22–August 7, 2020



**Abbreviation:** COVID-19 = coronavirus disease 2019.  
 \* Issue dates are the dates the issuing official signed the order implementing the mandatory mitigation measure. In some instances, mitigation measures were effective either immediately or within 1 to 3 days of issue. <https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-disease-epidemiology/index.php#novel-coronavirus-admin-orders>; <https://azgovernor.gov/executive-orders>.  
 † As of September 1, 2020. Specimen collection date was used for confirmed cases, and symptom onset date was used for probable cases.  
 ‡ Plotting of 7-day moving average began when cumulative case count exceeded 20 cases.