



# ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

September 21, 2021

The Honorable Sharon Bronson, Pima County Representative  
The Honorable Ann English, Cochise County Representative  
The Honorable Bruce Bracker, Santa Cruz County Representative  
The Honorable Tony Reyes, Yuma County Representative  
Arizona Border Counties Coalition

**Re: Emergency Assistance for Rural Hospitals and Emergency Centers**

Dear Ms. Bronson, Ms. English, Mr. Bracker, and Mr. Reyes:

Thank you for your outreach and your commitment to the health of the residents and healthcare systems in the Arizona border region. These healthcare systems provide a critical service to Arizona residents.

The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) continues to monitor the status of healthcare facilities throughout the state and operate the Arizona Surge Line, which is currently authorized to facilitate the transfer of COVID-19 patients to appropriate levels of care. While the Arizona Surge Line has facilitated the transfer of COVID-19 patients for the majority of requests, a small percentage of transfer requests in the last week are still pending due to statewide hospital staffing shortages.

The capacity challenges facing hospitals in the Southern region are similar across all regions of the state. Due to the healthcare staffing shortages across the entire state limiting available beds across the healthcare system, expansion of the Arizona Surge Line to all patient transfers is not currently a viable option to improve patient transfers. As you've stated, the most immediate way to bolster capacity and improve patient outcomes in Arizona is to enhance staffing in hospitals across the state. This initiative is currently underway with over 70 nurses contracted through the Surge Staffing Initiative expected to start in Arizona this week and nearly 200 expected to start by the end of September. Contracting for additional nurses is ongoing.

We appreciate the border region's commitment to the health of the community including the opportunity to refer eligible patients for monoclonal antibody therapies. ADHS maintains a call center that can help direct clinicians to nearby locations administering monoclonal antibodies. This call center can be reached by calling 1-844-542-8201. The

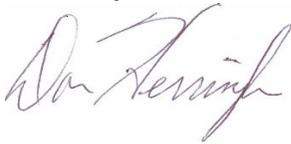
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federal government also maintains a treatment locator webpage at <https://protect-public.hhs.gov/pages/therapeutics-distribution>. ADHS continues to conduct outreach with additional healthcare providers and federal partners to identify options for expanded access to these treatments.

ADHS remains committed to strategies to improve the health of Arizonans. First and foremost, as it relates to COVID-19, that includes getting all eligible Arizonans vaccinated. The success of the border counties in increasing vaccination coverage in the region is laudable, and we look forward to continuing work with your local health departments to continue these successes as vaccines are available for younger age groups or as boosters for specific adult populations.

Sincerely,



Don Herrington  
Interim Director

c: Dr. Richard Carmona

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