



## COVID-19 Newsletter #4 - May 1, 2020

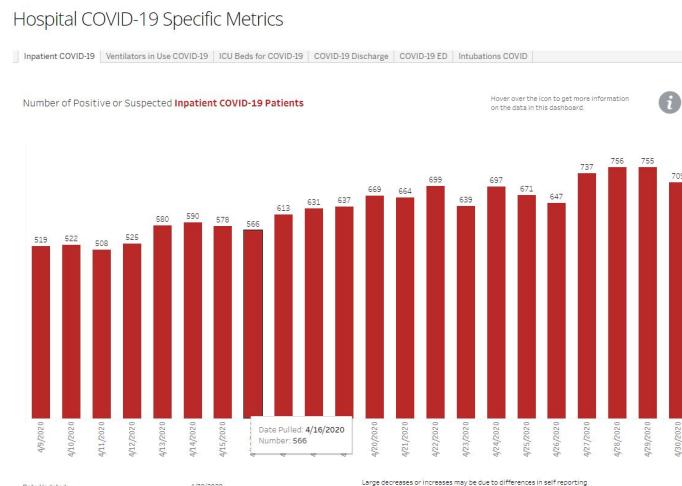
**from State Representative Mitzi Epstein**

Hello,

Many Thanks to our essential workers. You are there providing healing and vital goods and services for us, and we are staying home for you. It seems to be working. Most of our hospitals have capacity.

**However, Arizona had the highest number of new cases in one day April 30th with 446, so we are not clear from the virus, yet.**

The number of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Arizona seems to be on an overall trend of increasing, but also the number of tests being done is increasing. So those numbers do not tell a whole story.



Therefore, it's useful to look to the hospital capacity.

- Overall, the trend is increasing cases in hospitals, but on the brighter side, Arizona's hospital beds have held at about 25% available since about mid-April.
- Emergency Department beds available have been decreasing from about 74% available mid April to 64% available now.
- ICU beds in Coconino County have been full since mid-March.

You can see many charts and data points at the [AZ Department of Health Services webpage, click here.](#)

**Vaccine and Universities**

**ASU and UA have announced that classes will resume in August.**

President Crow assured families in an email that they are implementing whatever health measures are needed to keep students and faculty safe.

**An Oxford University research team began clinical trials on a vaccine** for the novel coronavirus last week. They hope for some results by mid summer that may show good immune responses for longer-term protections. The researcher who was [interviewed on Horizon, \(Apr 30\)](#) said that we need not just this vaccine to be successful, but for lots of them to work well. It's a race against the virus, not a race against each researching team.

## Should Businesses Re-Open?

I applaud Gov. Ducey for relying on the science, and the Arizona data to make decisions about changes to the "Stay Home" Executive Orders. A phased-in approach is wise.

Some folks have asked, "Why can't we just let those who want to stay home do so, and let everybody who doesn't mind risking their health do what they want?"

**The answer of course is, "Our healthcare and other essential workers need us to stay home for them,"** at least for the next couple weeks.

Reports show that the people who are getting sick are the people who cannot stay home. "It increasingly is infecting... grocery store employees, delivery drivers and construction workers. Sometimes they, in turn, infect their families." I do not have Arizona data on these populations, but [these anecdotes](#) are of concern. Nobody wants to re-open, only to overwhelm our hospitals and have to shut down again right away.

[But we must re-open in some way soon!](#) My heart goes out to families who are frustrated and anxious about not having a paycheck, or trying to homeschool while also working from home. The emotional stress is high, and **we need a measured change.**



## TESTING BLITZ!

Public health officials tell us that the way to control the spread and re-open businesses is to apply widespread testing. We need better counts of people who have the virus, and where they are in aggregate.

Over 30 providers from around the state are partnering with ADHS for the 3-day [Arizona Testing Blitz](#) on May 2, 9, and 16. They will do the diagnostic testing to determine if a person has COVID-19 now. (not the antibody tests) If you think you might have the illness, or you have been exposed to somebody with COVID-19, you may call to make an appointment and get a test at several locations on the next 3 Saturdays.

**Total tests to date = ~75,000**

Blitz might add= 30,000 to 60,000 tests.

2% of Arizonans =~ 140,000 might be the number of tests needed to be done regularly to assure our hospitals do not become overwhelmed. (Or it might be 1%. Or 50%...)

- In an email from ADHS to legislators, we were told that ADHS feels, "**the supply chain for laboratory testing** is becoming more robust," based on a teleconference phone call with the White House Task Force.

Personally, I am not confident that is so. Based on the White House Task Force's testing announcement April 27th, [\*Sen. Patty Murray said, "It doesn't set specific, numeric goals, offer a time frame, identify ways to fix our broken supply chain, or offer any details whatsoever on expanding lab capacity..."\*](#)

**The White House is still leaving the onus on the states to figure it out.**

- The supply chain problem is multi-faceted with some serious shortages in the special swabs, reaction agent, PPE, and trained people to do the testing. [Click to read more.](#)
- **Gov. Ducey is managing the many parts of this pandemic well, in my opinion.** From very little data reported in March, to a full dashboard of data now, transparency has improved. The many parts are being managed. As problems arise, solutions are developed over time.
- **However, each step that has improved could have been much better right from the start.** The military has plans for many scenarios and practices them regularly. Arizona's Department of Health Services and Department of Economic Security were not well-prepared for this

pandemic, despite plenty of warning from academia, the federal government, and private think-tanks like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

## What is Arizona Doing About PPE?



1. ASU has created a [peer-to-peer help system](#), called "[PPE Response Network](#)" to bring together makers and people who need PPE. (Personal Protection Equipment) Click the icon to read about this exciting collaboration of people making the equipment, sterilizing it, and delivering it to healthcare professionals. If you are a maker, you can sign up to help.  
**Thanks to Rep. Jennifer Jermaine for bringing this resource to my attention, and sharing it with our House Caucus.**
2. Honeywell in Arizona is manufacturing PPE. Folks have asked me, "[Will that mean Arizonans get the face masks faster?](#)"  
**NO.** Despite a lot of fanfare around the governor making a deal with Honeywell, the products will be under the Trump Administration's purview. [Honeywell's website reads, "Honeywell will deliver these masks for the Strategic National Stockpile to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#), who will then distribute" the precious N95 masks.  
**Nonetheless, THANK YOU to every Arizona worker at Honeywell who is helping all Americans by making this PPE!**



## Donating blood is as important as ever.

When I donated last Saturday, plenty of protocols were in place to keep everybody safe at the Vitalant Donation Center in Chandler. Thank you to all the health professionals working there!

I have been updating my list of COVID-19 Resources. [Click here for the latest.](#)



As a reminder, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have identified the following **steps to prevent illness**, among others:

- Put at least 6 feet of **distance between yourself and others**.
- **\*\*\* UPDATE: The more distance, the safer. The virus may spread more easily than was first known. If you are walking or biking, leave 12 feet to 60 feet between yourself and another person. [Read this blog from webMD.](#) \*\*\***
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water aren't available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**.
- **Avoid touching** your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick

- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- **Wear a DIY facemask when you go out.** My mask helps you; your mask helps me.

Thank you for all you are doing to help Flatten The Curve. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance during these times.

If you have any concerns or questions please reply to this email to ask me. Or call my office. Rep. Jermaine and I share an assistant, Kathy, who is working from home and the office phones are forwarded to Kathy: 602-926-4870 .



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