



MEMORANDUM

Date: March 6, 2020

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

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "CHH", is written over the printed name "C.H. Huckelberry".

Re: **Pima County Response to Coronavirus**

As the Coronavirus virus (COVID-19) spreads around the world, Pima County is prepared to manage both the virus and the accompanying spread of misinformation that may occur. Led by the Pima County Health Department with the active participation of a wide variety of health partners across the community, Pima County is utilizing its well-established systems to communicate with both subject matters experts including the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) and with local health care providers and the community at large.

Beginning immediately, the Pima County COVID-19 Response Team, led by Chief Medical Officer Dr. Francisco Garcia and Health Department Director Dr. Bob England, will provide an avenue for the daily exchange of the most up to date information amongst and between scientists and health care providers. The goal is to facilitate consistent and clear guidance for the range of clinical and organizational challenges that we will encounter as the situation evolves. Representatives of the Team will develop daily updates that will be disseminated through traditional media and social media outlets. As part of the strategy, Pima County has established a webpage – pima.gov/covid19, with an enormous amount of information about the illness and how those in our community can protect themselves and their families.

The purpose of these meetings and communication is to not only address the potential pandemic crisis, but to respond to the confusion that can be created when misinformation is spread.

Today, ADHS has announced what may be the third case of COVID-19 in Arizona. Notably, the individual under investigation does not have a history of travel to an impacted area or prior contact with a confirmed case, which may mean that we have the first case of "community transmission" in the state. Please know, this case is not in Pima County.

As a reminder, there is a lot still to learn about the new Coronavirus outbreak but what we do know from data gathered from communities across the globe dealing with the outbreak tells us that the worse thing we can do as a community in response to the virus is overreact.

The impact of COVID-19, when widespread, will look something like a bad flu season. Though the virus is quite contagious, the vast majority of infections are mild – sometimes

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asymptomatic – and not typically lethal (deadly). COVID-19 is most dangerous for older adults and those with underlying chronic disease.

There have been calls by some in our community to close schools, shutter businesses, or cancel events because of the mere threat of the virus coming to Pima County, not just when (and it's likely going to be when, not if) there is a confirmed case here. Doing so will only cause severe economic and social disruption beyond what we will already experience and will have little to no effect on containing the spread of this virus. We do not close schools due to the flu, and we are going through a pretty bad flu season currently, and we should not close schools and the like for COVID-19.

We are prepared for changes as the situation evolves. Our public health officials will ensure that information about COVID-19 is continuously and readily available.

CHH/mp

c: Mary Jacobs, Town Manager, Town of Oro Valley
Jamsheed Mehta, Town Manager, Town of Marana
Mike Ortega, City Manager, City of Tucson
Kelly Udall, Town Manager, Town of Sahuarita
John Vidaurri, City Manager, City of South Tucson
Jan Leshner, Chief Deputy County Administrator
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,
Health and Community Services
Bob England, Health Services Interim Director, Health Department