

# News Release

For Immediate Release: September 1, 2021

## **Governor Ducey Announces Additional \$60 Million To Support Hospital Staffing**

### ***Funding To Help Hospitals As Hiring Medical Professionals Becomes More Competitive***

**PHOENIX** — Governor Doug Ducey today announced \$60 million to support staffing at health care facilities that deploy proven techniques to decrease COVID-19 related hospitalizations, including administering monoclonal antibody treatments and offering vaccination at discharge.

“Arizona’s health care professionals and all frontline workers are heroes, without a doubt,” said Governor Ducey. “We are working to make sure they have the resources they need. This funding opportunity will decrease stress on existing hospital staff, increase hiring opportunities and decrease the risk of COVID-19 hospitalizations in Arizona. I’m grateful to all the nurses, doctors, first responders, frontline workers and everyone supporting and protecting our fellow Arizonans during this health emergency.”

COVID-19 hospitalizations represent a significantly lower proportion of hospital patients than in previous waves due largely to the deployment of vaccinations among the most vulnerable populations. Despite this, hospitals are experiencing higher numbers of patients than normal. This has led to staffing challenges as doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists and other health care providers are in high demand across the country and hiring costs for these needed professionals has increased dramatically. This funding will help ensure that Arizona hospitals can obtain temporary staff to assist and alleviate stress on existing staff.

“This latest COVID-19 surge has been challenging for health care workers,” said Linda Hunt, President and CEO of Dignity Health’s Southwest Division. “They are exhausted yet continue to step-up in the most heroic ways. The high volume of patients compounded by the shortage of doctors and nurses across the country is creating intense competition for a limited pool of nurses nationwide. I am grateful for Governor Ducey’s actions today to bring more health care workers to Arizona as we navigate through this latest surge. This effort will help provide the relief desperately needed for our most valued resource — our staff. The Governor recognizes and supports the needs of our health care workforce. We will continue to work together to find long-term solutions that sufficiently invests in a sustainable health care workforce for Arizona.”

Monoclonal antibodies are designed to block the virus’ attachment and entry into human cells, and the treatment can be used for mild to moderate COVID-19 patients. When administered early enough, this treatment can dramatically decrease the patient’s risk of developing severe COVID symptoms. Expanding the use of monoclonal antibody treatment will help decrease the rate of hospitalizations and help alleviate pressure on hospitals and staff.

Tucson Medical Center in January [became the second treatment center nationwide solely focused on administering monoclonal antibodies](#) to help patients avoid severe illness and hospitalization. The center’s temporary treatment program was successful, and according to the [Arizona Republic in February](#):

*“Since it opened earlier this month, the TMC center has infused 600 patients. None has had allergic reactions to the medication and anecdotally, about 1% have been admitted to the hospital, though actual outcome data is not yet available, said Mimi Coomler, the hospital's chief operating officer.”*

This funding will be administered by the Arizona Department of Health Services.

#### BACKGROUND

Governor Ducey has dedicated \$145 million to support hospital staffing in response to the pandemic.

On November 18, the Governor announced an [investment of \\$25 million to bolster hospital staffing](#) and reward frontline medical workers for their dedication to protecting fellow Arizonans. The funding was used to pay for higher staff costs due to current demand and allow hospitals to reward their existing direct care employees with bonuses.

On December 2, the Governor [directed an additional \\$60 million to provide more staffing at Arizona hospitals](#). With the funding, the Arizona Department of Health Services worked to secure an additional 500 nurses through the end of December, with additional staffing to last throughout January 2021.