News Release: Arizona Department of Health Services Provides Staffing Support to Arizona Hospitals

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Arizona Surge Line Enhanced to Deploy Out of State Nursing Staff to Hospitals with Critical Staffing Needs

PHOENIX — Today, the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) announced a partnership with Vizient, Inc. to bring nearly 600 critical care and medical-surgical nurses from out of state into Arizona to support expanded capacity within Arizona hospitals. Hospitals in need of critical staffing support may receive these resources from ADHS free of charge for up to six weeks as they enhance their internal surge plans to fill staffing gaps.

COVID-19 hospitalizations in Arizona have increased with hospitals reporting nearly 3,500 COVID-19 inpatients and more than 900 patients in their intensive care units. Hospitals have reported the ability to activate additional beds in their facilities with access to more nursing staff. Over the last month, federal partners have sent nearly 100 National Disaster Medical System personnel to Arizona on a two-week deployment at the request of state and local public health and hospitals. The staffing support provided by ADHS will offer additional assistance.

"ADHS is committed to supporting our hospital partners and frontline healthcare workers," said Dr. Cara Christ, ADHS director. "Our frontline healthcare workers and hospital staff have worked tirelessly to care for Arizonans and we are so appreciative of their efforts. We've prioritized providing these staffing resources to fill critical resource gaps in hospitals and ensure they can continue to provide excellent care across the state."

Hospitals will be prioritized for staffing placement based on patients' referrals through the Arizona Surge Line, or if they have the ability to manage more intensive care unit (ICU) or medical-surgical patients with increased staffing. Staffing placement will be coordinated through the Arizona Surge Line based on an application completed by the hospital. To be eligible, hospitals must be operating in accordance with all Executive Orders,

provide expedited onboarding and orientation, and have exhausted other existing avenues of increasing staffing.

Arizonans can support Arizona's hospitals and healthcare workers by continuing to practice COVID-19 prevention measures:

- Physically distance by staying at least six feet away from others.
- Wear a cloth face covering in public.
- Arizonans at higher risk for severe illness should continue to stay at home and avoid attending settings with 10 or more people who are not usual household contacts. People at higher risk for severe illness include adults 65 or older and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Stay at home when you are sick.

If you believe you have been exposed to or infected with COVID-19, stay home unless you are seeking medical care. Arizonans can find COVID-19 testing locations at azhealth.gov/COVID19testing.

The Arizona Surge Line is a free 24/7 service managed through ADHS that hospitals can call to facilitate the transfer of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases to an appropriate level of care. Arizona hospitals have agreed to provide near real-time bed and ventilator status through a central hub and to rapidly place patients if bed space is available. The Arizona Surge Line will also coordinate the transport between facilities if a transfer is necessary.

ADHS activated its Health Emergency Operations Center on January 27th after the first case of travel-associated COVID-19 was confirmed in Arizona. The Health Emergency Operations Center remains open to coordinate the State's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. For more information about Arizona's response to the COVID-19 outbreak, visit azhealth.gov/COVID-19.

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