

Doctor describes ICU and emergency room conditions as Arizona COVID cases soar

Briana Whitney

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Phoenix-area ICU doctor: Hospital care to suffer if COVID-19 surge plans begin

As of June 12, COVID-19 hospital patients using inpatient beds, ventilators and ICU beds are the highest they have ever been in the state.



Former state health chief warns hospitals could be working in crisis mode by next month

A state health official says nurses might have to act in the place of doctors in certain situations.



PHOENIX (3TV/CBS 5) - As Arizona COVID case numbers continue to soar, hospitals are seeing their emergency rooms fill with sicker and sicker patients every day.

Arizona's Family has talked to Dr. Frank Lovecchio through this entire pandemic. He works at both Banner and Valleywise hospitals treating coronavirus patients.

We asked him what he's witnessing in the emergency rooms and intensive care unit as the COVID numbers keep increasing. "Did you see people die from this, this weekend?" asked reporter Briana Whitney.

"Yes. There have been a few deaths I know of this weekend," Dr. Lovecchio said.



Health officials urge Arizona hospitals to activate emergency plans amid COVID-19 rise

The letter comes as our state sees a recent rise in COVID-19 cases.

Behind the Arizona statistics making national headlines, are the families suffering. Lovecchio says he is watching his patients with COVID-19 declining faster than ever, like an older man he cared for this weekend.

"He asked if he could make a call in the hospital. It was very tragic to hear him say

goodbye to his god kids and grandchildren who you could really tell loved him," he recalled.

Just over the last two days state data shows the number of Arizona COVID patients on ventilators, in the ICU, in the ER, and inpatient have been the highest they've ever been.

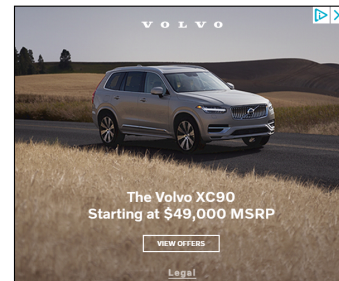


Hospitals to Arizonans: We're ready to take care of you amid spike in COVID-19 cases

"As representatives of the largest health systems representing 80% of care provided in this state, we would like to assure the public that we have available bed capacity and surge plans

And according to data from DOMO Data Solutions, Maricopa County is leading the entire country in new cases compared to seven days prior.

"There's a lot of counties in our country that are much bigger than us and we're leading the pack," said Lovecchio. "Over the last two



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are in place to continue to serve the people of Arizona."

weeks we've increased our testing by about 50%, and unfortunately our positive

rate has increased by 82%."

Dr. Lovecchio said, while he hasn't seen somebody test positive again for COVID, he's now seeing patients who had the disease coming back to the hospital with complications. "Most likely there's going to be some permanent damage depending on how sick you were, and we are starting to see suggestions of that," he said.



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Arizona Congressman Greg Stanton tweeted Sunday that per capita, Arizona's infection rate is now more than three times higher than New York state.

[State health officials reported](#) more than 1,100 new cases in Arizona on Monday alone. That brings the statewide total to more

than 36,000 cases.

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Briana Whitney

Reporter

Briana Whitney is a reporter for Arizona's Family and has worked tirelessly to give a voice to those who don't have one. **Read more** about Briana.



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