

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

ER doctor says, at times, some Arizona hospitals have run out of ICU beds

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On Monday, Arizona announced there were over 100,000 coronavirus cases in the state.



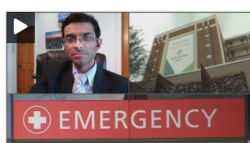
Rise in AZ COVID-19 cases having impact on patients with other medical issues

Thousands of non-essential medical procedures are being postponed again because of Arizona's skyrocketing number of COVID-19 cases.



Long wait times for COVID test results contributing to hospital staff shortages in Arizona

"Some people are making bad choices where they may have illness symptoms but because they cannot afford to be home waiting for test results, they continue to work," an Arizona doctor said.



PHOENIX (3TV/CBS 5) - The number of intensive care unit beds has reached a critical low in Arizona, and at times, some hospitals are running out. The coronavirus pandemic is forcing hospitals to make tough decisions on how to care for the sickest patients.



Generic photo of the intensive care unit at a hospital.

(Source: 3TV/CBS 5)

"There has (sic) certainly been times over the last three or four days that we've been on red alert in the hospital where we have minimum to no beds in the intensive care unit, and that's just at a few of the hospitals," says Dr. Frank

LoVecchio, an emergency room physician who has worked at several Valley hospitals.

📄 **Arizona hospitals on track to run out of bed space by August**

Hospital administrators have not been willing to share numbers on their ICU bed availability, but data maintained by the Arizona Department of Health Services shows ICU bed usage at 89%.

"The only way to get a new patient in the ICU is somebody dies, which has been happening, we see it, or somebody gets discharged or downgraded maybe to another unit where they're not as critical," says LoVecchio.



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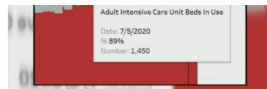
Texas and Arizona ER doctors say they are losing hope as hospitals reach capacity

In Arizona, which saw its lowest-ever number of available ICU beds Tuesday, Dr. Murtaza Akhter said so many patients are coming in that he is already having to make tough decisions over resources.



Gov. Ducey limits restaurant occupancy, announces more West Valley testing amid coronavirus pandemic

"We have had a brutal June in Arizona," he said.



Data maintained by the Arizona Department of Health Services shows ICU bed usage at 89%.

(Source: 3TV/CBS 5)



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To provide more beds, hospitals must acquire more staff to care for patients who might occupy the beds. Hospitals tell Arizona's Family they are adding more health care workers to the frontlines.

A spokesperson for Banner Health said Monday, "We continue to load balance throughout our system. That may mean patient transfers to/from Tucson/Phoenix depending on bed availability and staffing at the moment."

The spokesperson said Banner has added nearly 400 workers from out-of-state to assist.



The COVID-19 case numbers continues to surge in Arizona since reopening

Arizona has become one of the states across the country that has seen a huge spike in coronavirus cases since Governor Ducey's Stay-At-Home executive order expired.

A spokesperson for Valleywise said they had "very limited ICU space available." Abrazo and Honor Health both said they have acquired outside staff. LoVecchio says when bed space runs out, hospital workers can call a hotline to locate available ICU beds.

LoVecchio says it appears people who are not sick with

COVID-19 are avoiding the hospitals, allowing staff to use resources to treat those who are severely ill. The pandemic is heating up at a time, LoVecchio says, hospitals typically have low volume. He's concerned about what will happen in the wintertime.

"Are we going to get a lot of winter visitors? Maybe, maybe not. Are we going to be full again? Yes, seems pretty obvious," says LoVecchio. "It depends on how the flu season is, but flu leads to pneumonia and lots of those patients get admitted."

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