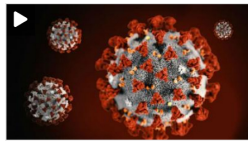


Valley doctors and nurses on frontlines say more help is needed in hospitals

Emma Lockhart

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Former Arizona epidemiologist says virus may not be containable

The coronavirus is already so widespread that it is comparable to a wildfire, according to the co-director of Tgen North.



PHOENIX (3TV/CBS5) -- Arizona is now a national hot spot for coronavirus and our hospitals are feeling the impact. Doctors and nurses on the frontlines said more hands are needed. So some hospitals are calling in help from other states.

Cameron Susa, 25, is a nurse from Colorado. He volunteered to work at Banner University Medical Center when coronavirus cases started spiking in Arizona. "We are slammed," Susa said. "As soon as I get someone off of my unit, I have eight more patients on standby waiting here."

Dr. Frank Lovecchio is a Valley emergency room physician. He said hospitals have enough beds but staffing is now a concern. He said more Valley hospitals are turning to help from out of state and hiring travel nurses.



Banner Hospitals are preparing ICU for increase in coronavirus cases

With COVID-19 numbers rising in Arizona, concern for access to medical treatment has many worried that there won't be enough medical assistance available if they were to fall ill.

"Most of the hospitals that I am working in are getting help from the outside. We know that we had a big group of traveling nurses come into a few of the hospitals," said Lovecchio.

Banner Health provided this statement to Arizona's Family:

"Our ICUs remain very busy. COVID-19 patients require an extensive amount of care – more than what you would expect of a typical ICU patient. That means that our ICUs currently require more staff to care for these patients. That is the primary concern that we are working to solve at this time. Here are some ways we are working to address this:

- We continue to hire nurses, respiratory therapists and others who are skilled in caring for patients with respiratory illnesses like COVID-19.
- We have rehired some individuals who retired and wanted to come back into the workforce.
- We are upskilling team members. This means that we train a team member from another unit or area of the hospital in the skills necessary to care for patients in an ICU.
- We have contracted with agencies to bring nurses from other states to Arizona.
- Given our multi-state footprint, Banner also has the opportunity to temporarily redeploy team members to Arizona from other states where we operate. Last week, three of our Colorado nurses volunteered to support their Arizona colleagues in the fight against COVID-19. They arrived last Friday, and others are scheduled to arrive in the near future.

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Valleywise Health said they are looking to leverage travel nurses and staff from other locations.

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