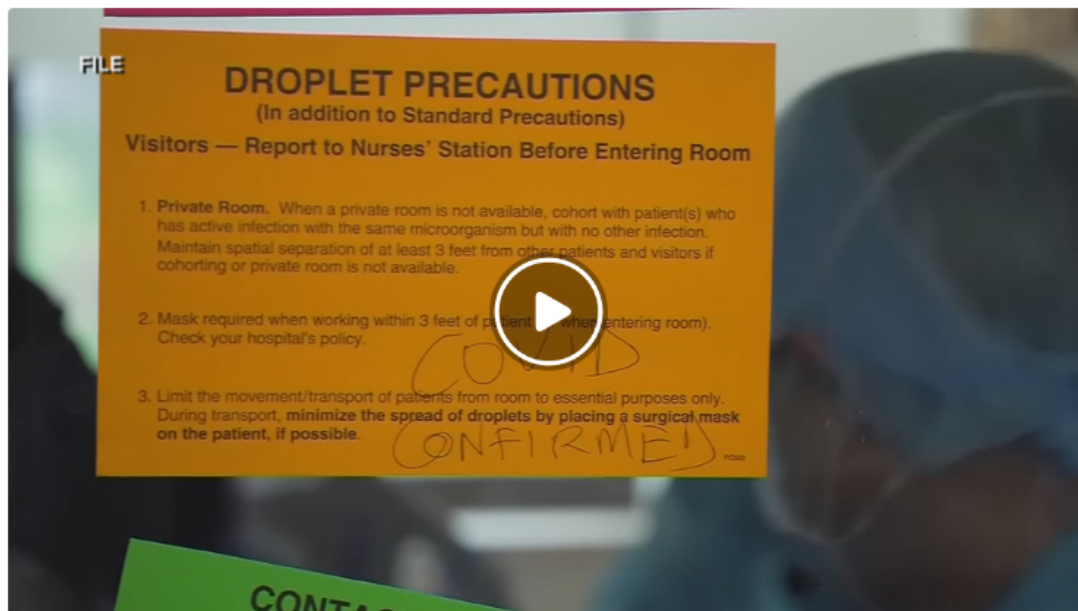


# Hospital staffing an issue as coronavirus cases rise in Arizona

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Hospital administrators are bracing for a possible staffing shortage as hospitals gear up for the winter season and new surge of coronavirus cases.



**PHOENIX (3TV/CBS 5)** - The number of COVID-19 patients in Arizona hospitals is the highest since August. And while health officials say there are plenty of beds available, the big concern is having enough staff to operate them.

"We are at a tipping point here in the state of Arizona," said Valleywise Health's Chief Medical Officer Dr. Michael White.

**Staffers worry Phoenix-area hospitals are facing shortages of ICU beds and workers**

Dr. White says Valleywise's ICU hit 90% capacity Tuesday.



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(Source: 3TV/CBS 5)

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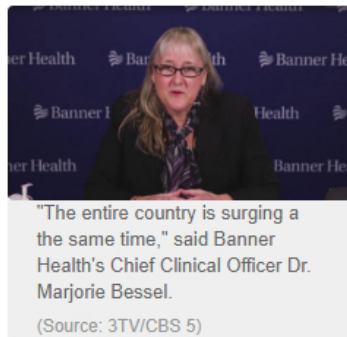
Staffing is one of the largest hurdles as hospitals compete for resources.

"We've worked very hard throughout the pandemic to make sure that we've been able to train and upskill our teams to be able to accommodate this, but we continue to run into the challenge," Dr. White said.

#### **Valley hospitals impose no visitor policy due to rise in COVID-19**

And with cases rising nationwide, hospitals here in Arizona can't always count on help from other states.

"The entire country is surging at the same time. This is significantly different than what Arizona experienced in the summer," said Banner Health's Chief Clinical Officer Dr. Marjorie Bessel.



Still, Dr. Bessel says Banner Health has been able to hire more than a thousand staff members from out of state to help out its hospitals in Arizona during the winter months.

"We will do everything we can to make sure we have

staff available," Dr. Bessel said.

Banner Health is also prepared to allow COVID-positive staff members to continue to work if they're asymptomatic. But Dr. Bessel says this would only happen if there were severe staffing shortages.