

Travelers return to Sky Harbor after spending holidays away amid calls to lessen travel

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PHOENIX - Millions of Americans made it back home Sunday night after spending Christmas away, and their arrivals come with concern that they brought the [coronavirus](#) back with them, causing another surge.

Airport arrivals include those at Phoenix's Sky Harbor. Just days after Christmas, Arizona's major airport was packed with travelers returning home from a holiday away.

Sarah Jozwiak from Scottsdale visited Chicago, saying, "It was beautiful. Chicago was all lit up beautiful."

Some travelers are just now flying in for a last-minute Christmas celebration, like Kathryn Anderson from Dallas, Texas.

"My dad had COVID this summer and he's recovered so I wasn't gonna let a holiday pass without seeing him," Anderson said.

Brooke Ballard from Arkansas said, "We extra wiped down everything, made sure our masks are on. We had to

come see family, so we are doing what we can."

For the president of the Arizona Medical Association, Dr. Ross Goldberg, he says this scene is all too familiar.

"Pretty much a repeat of what happened after Thanksgiving," he said.

Back in November, many airports saw more travelers than they had in months since the start of the pandemic. A couple of weeks following Thanksgiving, there was another surge in coronavirus cases.

Goldberg says he and hospital staff are bracing for a third surge in cases after Christmas and New Years Day.

"Everyone says 'thank you,' they appreciate everything that we're doing and then they ignore what we're telling them, it's kind of a slap in the face," he said.

Another concern is whether local hospitals will be able to handle another surge in the midst of the already busy flu season.

"We've had two surges now. Adding on a third and maybe a fourth with New Years coming up ... it's very concerning for us that we're going to get overloaded with people," Goldberg said.

He adds that he knows all too well how tough it can be staying away from family, saying, "I haven't seen my family since thanksgiving of 2019."

He's asking people to be patient a little while longer as he and so many other healthcare workers continue the fight against COVID-19.

"There is help coming," he said, adding, "The more they don't listen, the longer this is going to take."