



# ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

March 30, 2020

Governor Douglas A. Ducey  
1700 West Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Re: Recommendation for Enhanced Physical Distancing in Arizona

Dear Governor Ducey,

As you recognized in your declaration of a public health emergency for the COVID-19 epidemic, addressing the spread of COVID-19 in Arizona necessitates a response and intervention made with data-informed, targeted solutions. Our primary goals in addressing this epidemic continue to be protecting Arizonans and ensuring capacity in our healthcare system.

In making our decisions, we continuously monitor several data points, including the number of cases, the spread of the virus through our communities, and the impact on our hospitals.

Our epidemiologists track these figures as a way to make informed recommendations on our mitigation strategies, including enhanced physical distancing.

Based on this analysis and in alignment with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), I believe now is the appropriate time to recommend elevating our guidance.

I don't make this recommendation lightly. As I have voiced before, I have significant concerns about the public health impacts a prolonged social distancing strategy could have on the mental health of Arizonans. The financial ramifications to individuals and businesses and the fear and anxiety caused by the COVID-19 outbreak can also have a negative impact on our communities' mental health. At a time in history when our residents would normally be comforted by others and our elderly community members would benefit from the enhanced physical presence of family and community members, the mental health impacts of physical distancing to mitigate disease spread are concerning. It's important that we prioritize *physical distancing* as a critical mitigation strategy to protect our healthcare system, but it is crucial to encourage our citizens to remain *socially connected*. I cannot emphasize this enough.

Based on this data and the considerations above, I am recommending an enhanced physical distancing order, encouraging Arizonans to stay home, but also to stay connected. This recommendation is consistent with guidance from the CDC and in accordance with the ADHS mitigation strategies matrix. Parallel to this, we are working with our healthcare providers to prepare them for an increase in cases, with appropriate bed capacity, supplies, and staffing.

Douglas A. Ducey | Governor    Cara M. Christ, MD, MS | Director

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Again, in this order, I would recommend you highlight the need for social connectedness. A call to action to our communities requiring them to implement social connectedness measures will ensure Arizonans have the social support they need during this unprecedented time.

I appreciate your leadership during this critical COVID-19 epidemic, your trust in our public health professionals, and your commitment to protecting public health in Arizona.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C.M. Christ MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cara M. Christ, MD, MS

Director