



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

COVID-19 Healthcare Staffing Guidance

Approved by State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee (SDMAC) - 4/1/2020

Background

The number of COVID-19 cases in Arizona is expected to rise, including the number of severe cases requiring hospitalization. Based on experiences in other states and countries, Arizona is preparing for a significant healthcare surge that will stretch the capacity of the existing healthcare infrastructure. It is likely that additional healthcare personnel will be required to fulfill the staffing needs of healthcare organizations across Arizona.

Arizona must plan for expansion of its healthcare workforce through multiple means, including the following options:

- Potentially utilizing medical and nursing students, EMCTs, PAs, and other medical professionals beyond their typical role
- Permitting residents that have completed their first year of residency to practice without attending supervision
- Leveraging the pool of retired healthcare providers and teaching faculty to provide patient care or clinical consultation
- Integrating out of state, Department of Defense, or other federal healthcare providers into Arizona healthcare systems, as these individuals are available

In order to implement this expanded set of healthcare workers rapidly, there should not be difficult, time-consuming process barriers when being onboarded into a medical facility.

The Arizona Department of Health Services and various health professional licensing boards have established administrative orders or waivers to accommodate the need for expanded healthcare staffing during the COVID-19 epidemic, with additional actions possible if necessary.

Recommendation

- 1. Healthcare organizations should establish expanded staffing plans that could integrate alternative healthcare resources into their current model.**
 - a. Healthcare organizations should identify what regulatory barriers exist with expanded staffing plans and summarize them for the consideration of the appropriate licensing board or regulating entity.**
- 2. Healthcare organizations should develop protocols for rapid, immediate onboarding of additional healthcare staff in their facility (e.g. rapid credentialing processes, etc.)**
- 3. Healthcare organizations should develop just-in-time training for healthcare workers to work in departments outside of their own (e.g. ICU, medical-surgical floors, triage) under the supervision of a clinical supervisor.**