

# Dr. Marjorie Bessel Press Conference Sept. 22

Good afternoon.

I want to open by thanking you, the members of the news media, for helping us get the message out about the importance of getting the COVID-19 vaccination.

We are not out of the woods, yet, but we are cautiously optimistic about the downward hospitalization trend we are seeing.

HOWEVER, this is not the time to let our guard down. The Delta Variant is still in our communities and it spreads rampantly. If you're vaccinated, you have a very small chance of landing in the hospital. If you're not vaccinated, the chances of you becoming critically ill and needing to be hospitalized increase substantially.

[SHOW GRAPHIC]

To demonstrate, let's look at this graphic that compares Banner Arizona hospitalizations of vaccinated and unvaccinated COVID patients. This is a snapshot from September 6, when 89 percent were unvaccinated. Out of 685 total hospitalized COVID patients, 605 are unvaccinated. Out of 280 in the ICU, 249 are unvaccinated. Even more important, out of 150 COVID patients on a ventilator, 135 are unvaccinated. The vaccines work!

Our COVID patients continue to be extremely sick and the unvaccinated are the most critically ill.

So, PLEASE, get vaccinated. The vaccines are safe and effective. And, even if you are vaccinated, we highly recommend masking indoors as an extra precaution and pay attention to news about recommendations for boosters.

Also, it's flu season, so make sure you get the flu vaccine. We are anticipating a severe flu season this year, so we want to protect ourselves and others, just like with the COVID vaccine.

While we are pleased to see a cautious downward trend, we're still seeing very sick COVID patients. Also, our forecasting tools predict an increase of hospitalizations next month. BUT, there's a way to alter this forecast.

Please get vaccinated as soon as possible. The COVID vaccines are safe and effective. They will significantly reduce your chances of being hospitalized or dying from COVID.

Thank you.