

THE ARIZONA SURGELINE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR HEALTHCARE FACILITIES + PROVIDERS

What is The Arizona Surge Line?

The Arizona Surge Line is a 24/7 toll-free call line that acts as a “doorway” for clinicians to other facility transfer centers and independent critical care and palliative consultants.

The call line will a) facilitate bed placement for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 to higher levels of care when clinically indicated b) facilitate bed placement for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 to lower levels of care when clinically indicated c) act as a safety net for transport between facilities and d) provide real time critical care and palliative care consultation services to providers managing COVID-19 patients.

Are all four components of The Arizona Surge Line available right now?

Facilitation of patient placement to higher levels of care will be available 4/20/20. Facilitation to lower levels of care and clinical consultation will be available in May 2020. The transportation safety net is being maintained.

How does The Arizona Surge Line work?

The Arizona Surge Line works with contractors to maintain a nearly real-time surveillance of all hospital bed and ventilator availability across the state. This allows The Arizona Surge Line Transfer Agent to effectively find appropriate care locations for patients throughout the state, without overwhelming any one hospital system. In terms of the critical care and palliative care consultation aspect, this is maintained by Arizona physicians, 24/7.

What is the benefit of having The Arizona Surge Line?

There are several benefits to having The Arizona Surge Line. By centralizing placement and maintaining surveillance of bed and ventilator capacity, a) patients are more quickly and efficiently able to access the appropriate level of care b) clinicians can spend more time at the bedside instead of on transfer calls c) no single Arizona hospital or system will be overwhelmed with admissions d) regions of Arizona experiencing acute increases in hospitalized COVID-19 patients can be relieved by areas that are less affected e) Arizona can maintain surveillance statewide bed capacity and be able to discuss and prepare for escalation to Conventional and Crisis Levels of Care.

Who is responsible for the organization and staffing of The Arizona Surge Line?

The Arizona Surge Line is organized by the Arizona Department of Health Services. The line itself is being staffed by EMCTs and dispatchers, and Arizona critical care and palliative care consultants.

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Does The Arizona Surge Line manage transfers for COVID only, or all transfers?

The Arizona Surge Line will manage transfers of suspected and COVID patients only. All other transfers will need to go through normal transfer operations.

Does The Arizona Surge Line remove the job of hospital transfer agents?

To the contrary. The Arizona Surge Line acts to patch one hospital to the transfer center of another hospital.

Does The Arizona Surge Line manage transportation?

At this time, no. All facilities should be utilizing their normal transportation protocols and contracts. When transportation resources are insufficient, The Arizona Surge Line will be able to assist with location of interfacility patient transportation.

How much does it cost to participate in The Arizona Surge Line?

The Arizona Surge Line is hosted and managed by The Arizona Department of Health Services. There is no cost for hospitals and healthcare systems to participate.

How do I make sure my facility is able to participate in The Arizona Surge Line?

If your Transfer Center or Chief Medical Officer is new to The Arizona Surge Line, they need to email surgeline@azdhs.gov for a start-up packet, which contains the Collaboration Principles, Data Surveillance and a Get Started Checklist. read the Healthcare Facility Onboarding Document posted at www.azdhs.gov/surgeline. The process should not be onerous, and most hospital facilities are already on board.

How long will The Arizona Surge Line remain active?

The Arizona Surge Line will remain active for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency.

What if I am an emergency department clinician seeking to admit a patient -- do I call The Arizona Surge Line to facilitate admission?

If your patient is a known or suspected COVID patient requiring a higher level of care, first utilize your own hospital's admission center. If there is not availability for a higher level of care within your hospital or hospital organization, you should call the Arizona Surge Line.

What if I am an outpatient clinician seeking inpatient admission of my patient -- do I call The Arizona Surge Line to facilitate admission?

You should follow your normal admission processes. If your transfer center normally handles these admissions, follow those steps. If you are not affiliated with a specific health care system and can admit your patient to any health care system, call the Arizona Surge Line for assistance.

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What if I am a transfer center agent at a hospital and another hospital calls about a COVID transfer?

By the Collaboration Principles posted online, all facilities should redirect other health care system's physicians and hospitals requesting a transfer to The Arizona Surge Line.

What if I am a transfer center agent at a hospital and a clinician at my own hospital calls about a COVID transfer?

Placement of COVID patients should first be made within a facility or that facility's hospital organization as availability allows. If there is no availability the clinician should be referred to the Arizona Surge Line.

What if I am a transfer center agent at a hospital and The Arizona Surge Line calls me for patient placement?

If The Arizona Surge Line contacts your facility's transfer center, it's because your facility has been indicated to have bed and ventilator capacity, is not being currently overwhelmed by Surge Line requests, and meets other algorithmic requirements. Each hospital should have a protocol in place for accepting patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, as a 30 minute turnaround is the accepted standard for Arizona facilities (see Collaboration Principles).

Does a healthcare facility need to accept patients from The Arizona Surge Line?

With awareness that The Arizona Surge Line is monitoring statewide hospital capacity -- ideally, yes. However, triage protocols at the individual facility do trump the Surge Line request, and these protocols should be followed by individual facilities.

What if my facility is unable to accept patients from The Arizona Surge Line?

In that circumstance, the requesting facility should be redirected to The Arizona Surge Line.

What if I am a clinician in need of real-time critical care consultation or palliative care consultation?

Physicians will be offered a real-time consultation with Arizona consultants if their patient is not able to obtain a hospital bed, ventilator or transport due to hospital surge; or for whom transport is expected to take >60 minutes to arrive. These consultants will be available in order to assist management in place. The right of first refusal for this consultation goes to the destination hospital.

What is the phone number for The Arizona Surge Line?

Arizona hospital transfer facilities have been notified of the phone number. Other organizations that have the number at this time include the Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association, Health System Alliance of Arizona, Phoenix Area IHS, and the ADHS Tribal Liaison.

What if I have further questions as a healthcare facility about The Arizona Surge Line?

Please see www.azdhs.gov/surgeline for available information or email surgeline@azdhs.gov.

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