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County suggests delay in reopening of schools

By Danyelle Khmara

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

The Pima County Health Department says it's unsafe to reopen schools for traditional face-to-face learning as the coronavirus continues to heavily impact the Tucson community.

The guidance to Tucson-area schools, released Tuesday, says the earliest traditional instruction could be anticipated to resume after Labor Day.

Pima County Health Department Director Dr. Theresa Cullen and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Francisco Garcia used public health data to form their recommendation — which schools are not required to follow.

A memo from Pima County Administrator Chuck Huckleberry outlined the reasoning for delaying in-person traditional instruction:

- Local, daily COVID-19 infections are at the highest amounts since the pandemic began. Pima County's total monthly infections have gone from 153 for March to more than 6,700 confirmed cases thus far for the month of July alone.

- Coronavirus transmission rates are above 11%. The World Health Organization recommends rates should be below 5% before reopening.

- Masks were only recently mandated, and it will take six weeks to see if the mitigation strategy is working.

- COVID-19 hospitalizations are at record levels. Local hospitals have nearly exceeded their ICU bed capacity, transferring some critical patients to hospitals around the state.

- Widespread testing is just now becoming available, and timely test results to allow for contact tracing do not exist in Pima County.

Though the guidance does not advise resuming traditional face-to-face learning, it does recommend the opening of school facilities for at-risk youth on a limited basis as envisioned in Gov. Doug Ducey's latest executive order.

See SCHOOLS, A2

Long-sought blood test for Alzheimer's getting closer

By Marilynne Marchione

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

An experimental blood test was highly accurate at distinguishing people with Alzheimer's disease from those without it in several studies, boosting hopes that there soon may be a simple way to help diagnose this most common form of dementia.

Developing such a test has been a long-sought goal, and scientists warn that the new approach still needs more validation and is not yet ready for wide use.

But Tuesday's results suggest they're on the right track. The testing identified people with Alzheimer's vs. no dementia or other types of it with accuracy ranging from 89% to 98%.

"That's pretty good. We've never seen that" much precision in previous efforts, said Maria Carrillo, the Alzheimer's Association's chief science officer.

Dr. Eliezer Masliah, neuroscience chief at the U.S. National Institute on Aging, agreed.

"The data looks very encouraging," he said. The new testing "appears to be even more sensitive and more reliable" than earlier methods, but it needs to be tried in larger, more diverse populations, he said.

The institute had no role in these studies but financed earlier, basic research toward blood test development.

Results were discussed at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference in San Antonio.

See BLOOD TEST, A2

COMING THURSDAY IN CALIENTE

COOL HIKES: With Mount Lemmon closed for months, we offer some alternative summer treks.



INSIDE TODAY'S STAR

Bridge	B4	Opinion	A6-7
Business	A13-14	TV	B7
Comics/puzzles	B6-7	Weather	C6

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CHIP SOMODEVILLA / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Attorney General William Barr appears before a House Judiciary Committee hearing on the oversight of the Department of Justice.

Democrats often used their five minutes of questioning to lay out their frustrations and cut off Barr as he attempted to answer.

AG Barr defends aggressive federal response to protests

By Mary Clare Jalonick, Michael Balsamo and Eric Tucker

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Attorney General William Barr defended the aggressive federal law enforcement response to civil unrest in America as he testified for the first time before the House Judiciary Committee, pushing back against angry, skeptical Democrats who said President Trump's administration is unconstitutionally suppressing dissent.

The hearing, held Tuesday as the late civil-rights icon John Lewis lay in state steps away outside the Capitol, highlighted the wide election-year gulf between the two parties on police brutality and systemic racism in law enforcement.

Massive protests have sparked unrest across the nation after the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police, and calls for police reform are growing louder.

Barr said "violent rioters and anarchists have hijacked legitimate protests" and argued the violence taking place in Portland, Oregon, and other cities is disconnected from Floyd's killing, which he called a "horrible" event that prompted a necessary national reckoning on the relationship between the Black community and law enforcement.

Barr insisted there was no systemic racism in law enforcement.



MATT MCCLAIN / THE WASHINGTON POST

Barr called George Floyd's killing "horrible" but said "largely absent ... are even superficial attempts by the rioters to connect their actions to George Floyd's death."

"Largely absent from these scenes of destruction are even superficial attempts by the rioters to connect their actions to George Floyd's death or any legitimate call for release," Barr said of the Portland protests.

The hearing marked Barr's first appearance before the committee after 18 months in office, bringing him face to face with the panel that voted last year to hold him in

contempt and is holding hearings on what Democrats say is politicization of the Justice Department under his watch. But little new ground was uncovered; fuming Democrats often used their five minutes to lay

See CONGRESS, A2

► Barr, Park Police distance Trump from clearing of protesters / A4

Twitter, Facebook pull virus drug video shared by president

By Darlene Superville and Amanda Seitz

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The feud between conservatives and social-media companies over alleged censorship escalated Tuesday after President Trump and his son shared a fresh dose of misinformation about a disproven drug for treating the coronavirus in videos that were quickly taken down by Twitter and Facebook.

The president, in a marked shift from the more measured approach he's taken toward the virus in recent days, also used his tweets to amplify criticism of Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious-disease expert.

Tuesday's feud focused mostly on hydroxychloroquine, a drug long approved to treat malaria that Trump has vigorously advocated as a treatment for COVID-19, the

disease caused by the virus.

Scientific studies have shown the drug can do more harm than good when used to treat symptoms of COVID-19, but doctors who believe otherwise argued for its use at an event Monday in Washington, citing their own experiences treating patients with the drug.

The news conference and ensuing viral video was organized by Tea Party Patriots Action, a dark-money group that has helped fund a pro-Trump political action committee.

Trump, his son Donald Trump Jr., and others shared video of the event on Facebook and Twitter, prompting both companies to step in and remove the content as part of an aggressive push to keep the sites free of potentially harmful information about the virus — though not before more than 17 million people had seen one version of the video circulating



EVAN VUCCI / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Trump shared a video on Twitter and Facebook about a malaria drug, hydroxychloroquine, that scientific studies have shown to do more harm than good.

on the web.

Many high-quality studies have found no evidence that hydroxychloroquine, when used with or without the antibiotic azithromycin, as touted many times by Trump, helps treat coronavirus infection or prevent serious disease from it. They include studies commissioned by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, the World

See TRUMP, A2

► Democrats, GOP far apart as virus aid talks intensify / A9

► GOP's jobless benefit plan could mean delays, states warn / A13

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