



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Chinese American community supplies Arizona hospitals with 100,000 procedure masks**

*Supplies purchased by Chinese American COVID-19 Relief AZ*

PHOENIX (April 10, 2020) – More than 100,000 Level 1 procedure masks were delivered from China to Arizona-based hospitals this week, thanks to the ingenuity and passion of a dedicated group of Chinese American residents within the state.

In Phoenix area, [Banner – University Medical Center Phoenix](#) and [Banner Desert Medical Center](#) received a shipment of 16,000 masks each on Friday, April 10. In Tucson, volunteers delivered 5,000 masks to [Banner – University Medical Center Tucson](#) Thursday and will bring an additional 3,000 next week.

The masks have been purchased and shipped from China and are being delivered by the group, [Chinese American COVID-19 Relief AZ](#). In addition, several other hospitals in the state will receive a shipment of medical masks from the group.

The COVID-19 relief fund formed in early March with a small group discussion on WeChat, a messaging/social media app, on shortages of personal protective equipment being reported in hospitals across America. With the shared concern, the Chinese American group began collecting donations to gather funds to supply local hospitals with personal protective equipment.

The initiative to supply local hospitals expanded to a full-scale community effort, encompassing a large subset of the Chinese American community in Arizona, with almost 300 volunteers and organizers. Within four days, the group raised over \$50,000, enough to purchase and ship over 100,000 medical masks from China, are en route for delivery to Arizona hospitals and more to come.

"We are thankful to be a recipient of the resourcefulness and generosity of the Chinese-American COVID-19 Relief Organization. Their ability to mobilize, research and make contacts to meet this community need is inspiring," said Andy Kramer Petersen, President & CEO of the [Banner Health Foundation](#).

Several companies in communication with the group have also committed to match funds for the group's COVID-19 relief efforts.

"At the beginning, the thought was only to make sure that our local hospitals weren't suffering from the reported shortages," Fang, an organizer in Tucson, said. "We have Chinese American families statewide who have gotten in touch with us [to contribute]. Everybody is worried about COVID-19, and more importantly, willing to do their part to help fight it."

The group proactively contacted local hospitals to better understand the scope of the shortage and to gather specific details on PPE certifications needed to ensure quality and safety, especially in the context of the wave of new COVID-19 patients.

Each night, the volunteers hold meetings to closely monitor progress. Volunteers working on sourcing the surgical masks contacted over 100 China-based PPE vendors and distributors to verify FDA certifications. Other groups worked through potential legal issues and stay in contact with hospitals.

U.S. healthcare and medical workers are bracing for a surge in COVID-19 patients who need hospital care and hospitals continue to report limited access to PPE, including suits and masks, dangerously increasing the risk of contracting and potentially spreading the virus within hospitals and those at the front lines.

"As citizens of an international community, we stood in solidarity with those in Asia [earlier this year] who were struggling through the [initial] outbreak of a deadly and unknown virus," Susan Liu, a member of the Hope Chinese School Board of Directors, said. "As the virus threatens to overwhelm our own homes, the Chinese American community has, without hesitation, thrown our efforts behind local hospitals and the incredible responsibilities they must shoulder."

"We are calling on members of the community at large to help raise money for the necessary protective gear for medical personnel," said Lin Tian Hall, principal at Hope Chinese School. "Together, we can really help the doctors and nurses who work selflessly every day to save lives."

Chinese American COVID-19 Relief AZ is a group of Chinese Americans working hard to bridge the PPE shortage at local hospitals. The group's motto: We are one community; we are all in this together.

Headquartered in Arizona, Banner Health is one of the largest nonprofit health care systems in the country. The system owns and operates 28 acute-care hospitals, Banner Health Network, Banner – University Medicine, academic and employed physician groups, long-term care centers, outpatient surgery centers and an array of other services; including Banner Urgent Care, family clinics, home care and hospice services, pharmacies and a nursing registry. Banner Health is in six states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada and Wyoming. For more information, visit [www.bannerhealth.com](http://www.bannerhealth.com).

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