

Benson Arizona Community Profile

Benson Hospital is located in the southeastern Arizona desert plains in the community of Benson. Benson is 45 miles east-southeast of Tucson, 50 miles west of New Mexico and 30 miles north of Mexico, in rural Cochise County.

Benson's location in the historic San Pedro Valley makes it a gateway to many historic and scenic places in Cochise County. The location has rugged mountains, grassy dales and, at an elevation of 3,685 feet, a desirable climate. Benson is near many historic attractions, making it a noted tourist destination.

Benson was founded in 1880, prior to Arizona's mining boom. The town quickly became a local transportation hub for southern Arizona, with stagecoach and railroad lines connecting the community to other places. Benson is proud of its Old West and railroad heritages, and is the home of Kartchner Caverns State Park, which is Arizona's fourth most-visited State park.

Arizona's extensive population growth has had an impact on the Benson community. Benson has experienced appreciable commercial growth in recent years. Developers have purchased large parcels of land in the area in anticipation of implementing plans to build new housing developments in the next five to 10 years. The current downturn in the nation's housing market has delayed these projects, but the development plans are still on the drawing board and undoubtedly will affect service demands on Benson Hospital when they are eventually fulfilled.

A new Wal-Mart opened in November 2006, contributing to an increase in retail sales of 45 percent. Benson also projects considerable residential growth. Over the next few decades, there are approximately 20,000 homes planned for the Benson area. Tourism, as well as accommodation and restaurant and bar patronage from traffic along Interstate 10 and State Routes 80 and 90, should contribute to area economic growth. The City of Benson also supports a large retired population and is a winter refuge for people from colder climates.

Benson's 2006 population is 4,820 and its population density is 134.9 residents per square mile of land. The racial makeup is comprised of 89.3 percent Whites, 1.3 percent Native Americans, 0.7 percent Blacks and 0.6 percent Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Hispanics comprise 19.8 percent of Benson's population. Benson's racial makeup is less heterogeneous than the Arizona makeup, which includes 75.7 percent Whites, 4.8 percent Native Americans, and 25.4 percent Hispanics. Benson's age distribution is 21.9 percent below twenty years of age, 22.2 percent from 20-24, 26.5 percent from 45-64 and 29.3 percent above 64 years of age. This age distribution is somewhat older than the statewide profile: Benson's above-44 population represents 55.8 percent of the resident population compared to 33.9 percent of the statewide population. For every 100 females in Benson, there are 95.7 males, for a female: male ratio of 1.04.



Benson's median household income is \$28,182, which is 36 percent less than Arizona's median household income of \$44,261. Residents living below the federal poverty level comprise 14.0 percent of the population compared to 13.9 percent of Arizona residents. Detailed tables profiling demographic, economic and healthcare coverage indicators at the community, county and state-wide levels are included.

Benson Hospital

A twenty-two bed district hospital, Benson Hospital became a Critical Access Hospital effective on January 1, 2002. The hospital is currently licensed to operate 22 acute care beds, all of which are licensed as swing beds. The community of Benson, where the hospital is located, is in an Arizona Medically Underserved Area, and in a primary care as well as a mental health Professional Shortage Area.

Benson Hospital opened in 1970 as a small community hospital meeting the needs of patients living near Benson. Due to Benson's location as a major nexus of several highways, the



Benson Hospital

emergency department is the hospital's major draw today. With the influx of hundreds of winter visitors and many new permanent residents, outpatient laboratory, radiology and rehabilitation services have dramatically increased. As the area develops over the next few years, the hospital strategic plan is a top priority.

Like Arizona state-wide, the Benson community is experiencing a population boom in recent years, growing from 2,839 people in 1970 to 4,820 in 2006. The warm, sunny winter climate that attracts an annual influx of winter visitors

affects the hospital's volume of outpatient visits. To accommodate increased patient demand, after receiving funding to construct a new emergency department, the hospital expanded its emergency room in March 2007 to 3,000 square feet, which now includes 12 beds, secured admitting, CT scans, an isolation room with separate entrance, and an urgent care unit. In addition, current plans call for further expansion on the existing campus, as well as for an outpatient rural health clinic.

Benson Hospital personnel have been actively involved with the Flex Program activities since the hospital's CAH designation. They are currently involved in the Flex Program sponsored Rural Performance Management (RPM) Balanced Scorecard system, and with Flex assistance, are in the process of implementing an electronic health record (EHR) system.

Flex staff have provided one-one-one technical assistance to help the hospital to "cascade" its balanced scorecard to each department. The Flex Program funded an EHR readiness assessment for the hospital that the facility used as a basis for planning and implementation. Further, the hospital received a small Flex contract to support EHR implementation. In January 2008, Flex staff wrote a grant proposal that was submitted to Congresswoman Gabriel Giffords on behalf of Benson Hospital for funding that would permit the hospital to complete its EHR system. Congresswoman Giffords submitted it for Congressional approval this March through the "earmark" funding system. The hospital's CFO has volunteered to participate in the 2008 annual Flex Conference scheduled to take place in Kansas City in July.

Benson Hospital actively participates in meetings of the Arizona Rural Quality Network Group and the Emergency Medical Services Working Group. They have sent representatives to three trainings on improved treatment of pneumonia, congestive heart failure, and protocols for better medication reconciliation. The Rural Hospital Flexibility Program in partnership with the Health Services Advisory Group offered these trainings. Hospital board took part in a workshop for increasing the effectiveness of hospital boards provided by the Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association with support from Flex.

Benson Hospital is also providing leadership in its use of the Balanced Scorecard to manage and improve performance throughout all hospital departments. The hospital's employees regularly use the scorecard to attain goals related to quality of care and financial outcomes. An online data retrieval system allows for benchmarking their performance against that of similar hospitals.

Inpatient services include skilled nursing swing beds, long-term respite, hospice care, and inpatient drug therapy. Comprehensive laboratory and radiology services are ordered as well as nutritional consultants and rehabilitation services.

Four of Benson's 22 acute-care beds are equipped with cardiac monitors. Cardiac and respiratory conditions are the most common diagnoses treated. In addition to acute care, the hospital provides services for patients who are in need of long-term or respite care. Many of these patients receive rehabilitation following orthopedic surgery. The hospital laboratory is licensed by the State of Arizona as a full-service laboratory and features blood banking and transfusion services, hematology, urinalysis, toxicology and therapeutic drug monitoring.

In late 2006, Benson Hospital became one of the rural hospitals participating in Teletrauma with University Medical Center in Tucson. The program links local patients with highly trained trauma surgeons and allows the local physician to communicate directly with the Tucson physician.

Comprehensive on-site laboratory and radiology services provide fast test results for emergencies, outpatients and inpatients. Comprehensive services provide needed test results to physicians quickly so that treatment can be initiated immediately. Reports can be faxed to health care providers in other communities within or outside of the state.

The Benson Hospital emergency physician and nursing staff are specially trained to provide emergency care, including trauma, cardiac or respiratory care. Based on the needs of the patient, quick transfer can be made to nearby facilities or admission at Benson Hospital.

Sources:

Arizona Department of Commerce, Benson Community Profile
Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Health Systems Development
Cochise College Center for Economic Research, 2004-2005 Benson Prospectus

**Benson Hospital, Benson, Arizona
Benson, Benson PCA, Cochise County and Arizona
Demographic, Economic Indicator, and Healthcare Coverage Profile 2006**

	BENSON	BENSON PCA	COCHISE COUNTY	ARIZONA
	<u>POPULATION</u>			
2006 Population	4,820	11,934	135,150	6,305,210
Population density ¹	134.9	12.9	21.9	55.5
Female % / Male %	51.1% / 48.9%	50.5% / 49.5%	49.6% / 50.4%	50.1% / 49.9%
	<u>AGE GROUP DISTRIBUTION</u>			
Age				
0-19	1,057 (21.9%)	3,066 (25.7%)	39,973 (29.6%)	1,871,275 (29.7%)
20-44	1,072 (22.2%)	2,747 (23.0%)	43,659 (32.3%)	2,295,094 (36.4%)
45-64	1,278 (26.5%)	3,338 (28.0%)	31,774 (23.5%)	1,318,234 (20.9%)
65+	1,413 (29.3%)	2,783 (23.3%)	19,744 (14.6%)	820,607 (13.0%)
	<u>RACE AND ETHNICITY</u>			
Race and Ethnicity				
White	89.3%	91.3%	76.4%	75.7%
American Indian	1.3%	1.1%	1.1%	4.8%
Black	0.7%	0.5%	4.6%	3.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.6%	0.5%	1.9%	1.9%
Other	8.1%	6.6%	16.0%	14.5%
Hispanic	19.8%	13.8%	31.1%	25.4%
	<u>ECONOMIC INDICATORS</u>			
Economic Indicators				
Below 100% FPL	14.0%	14.1%	17.7%	13.9%
Below 200% FPL	35.9%	37.8%	40.8%	33.5%
Unemployed	8.4%	6.7%	4.7%	4.2%
Median household income	\$28,182	\$29,840	\$34,202	\$44,261
	<u>HEALTH COVERAGE</u>			
Health Coverage				
Medicare beneficiaries	14.3%	14.2%	13.6%	11.1%
AHCCCS enrollees	21.8%	20.6%	19.4%	17.4%

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Health Systems Development, Primary Care Area and Places Special Area Statistical Profiles. Adapted February 2008.

¹Residents per square mile of land