

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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University of Arizona and South32 Launch Community Health Impact Assessment in Santa Cruz County
12-month Health Impact Assessment initiated before mining operations to help protect community health throughout Hermosa's full lifecycle

Researchers from the University of Arizona, in partnership with South32 Hermosa, have launched a comprehensive Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to better understand and protect the health of local Arizona communities as the Hermosa project advances.

The HIA will evaluate existing community health characteristics and conditions as a baseline before mining operations begin, providing a clearer picture of the current factors that influence public health in Santa Cruz County. This assessment will also assess potential health-related impacts of mining activities and recommend strategies to safeguard public health—particularly for vulnerable populations, by sharing findings and suggestions with community leaders and South32. In addition to identifying potential impacts, the HIA will also provide recommendations and propose strategies to address gaps in current knowledge areas where data is limited or outdated to strengthen understanding of existing health conditions.

The researchers from the University of Arizona's Zuckerman College of Public Health will conduct the assessment independently, leveraging its academic expertise and proven public health research methods. Its multidisciplinary team brings decades of expertise in public health, environmental health, epidemiology, and community-engaged research. South32 is assisting the process by providing project details, facilitating access to data and supporting community engagement and making available other independent expertise as needed. Nathan Lothrop, PhD, and Mona Arora, PhD, MsPH, will serve as co-Principal Investigators on the research study.

"This assessment is about more than collecting data, establishing a baseline, and creating the basis for monitoring future or emerging trends related to public health and Hermosa. It is about building trust in the community, collaborating with partners, and ensuring that health and wellbeing remain our priority," said Dr. Nate Lothrop, assistant research professor in the UA College of Public Health.

"We want to understand community needs today so we can track health metrics and inform decision-making moving forward," said Dr. Arora, assistant research professor in the college.

Key Objectives of the Health Impact Assessment:

- **Identify Baseline Health Characteristics** — Document existing community health conditions, including factors impacting, positively or negatively, public health and current environmental exposures, before mining operations begin.
- **Assess Potential Impacts and Benefits** — Examine beneficial and adverse health effects, including those that may disproportionately affect children, older adults, or other vulnerable groups.
- **Evaluate Cumulative Impacts** — Consider the combined influence of the project, the environment, and social conditions on community health.
- **Recommend Solutions** — Provide strategies to mitigate risks, strengthen resilience, and monitor health outcomes over time.

“Community input in tandem with public health expertise will guide every step of this process,” said Pat Risner, South32 Hermosa President. “By working together, we can ensure that Santa Cruz County’s health priorities are recognized, respected, and reflected in the outcomes of this assessment. At South32 Hermosa, we are committed to transparency and collaboration, and this Health Impact Assessment is an important way to listen, learn, and make sure we are protecting health while building a stronger future together.”

The HIA will be conducted over a 12-month period, with milestones including a Baseline Community Health Report that will be released in April 2026, followed by a Full HIA Report and Final Presentation in October 2026. By establishing a baseline before mining operations begin, the University team and community will have a clear point of comparison to fairly and transparently measure any future health changes that might be linked to the project, or to other existing or emerging conditions not necessarily related to Hermosa’s operations. Public engagement is a critical component of the process, with planned on-site visits, public presentations in Nogales, Sonoita, and Patagonia, and ongoing feedback through healthcare and external advisory workgroups. As findings are presented, the team will integrate feedback from community members, healthcare partners, and local leaders. South32 will work alongside the University team to respond to these findings and adapt project planning where necessary to protect community health.

Reports and presentations generated through the HIA will be made available to the public to support transparency and community awareness.

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About the University of Arizona’s Zuckerman College of Public Health

Established in 2000, the Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health at the University of Arizona delivers education, research and service programs that build healthier communities locally, nationally and globally. The only nationally accredited college of public health in Arizona, the college enrolls hundreds of students per year in degree programs at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral levels taught at campuses in Tucson, Phoenix and online. As a leader in public health research and promotion with a focus

on health equity, the college receives significant grant funding from federal agencies. Through research, education and community engagement among diverse populations, the Zuckerman College of Public Health continues to find solutions to public health challenges across the state and around the world. For more information: publichealth.arizona.edu.

About South32 Hermosa

Located in a historic mining district in the Patagonia Mountains of Southern Arizona, South32 Hermosa is currently the only advanced mine development project in the United States that could produce two federally designated critical minerals — manganese and zinc — both of which are essential minerals for powering the nation's energy future. Learn more at www.south32hermosa.com.

Hermosa is a polymetallic development comprised of a zinc-lead-silver sulfide deposit, a battery-grade manganese deposit and an extensive, highly prospective land package with the potential for further polymetallic and copper mineralization.

Media Contacts

Shipherd Reed
University of Arizona
Zuckerman College of Public Health
Director of Communications
520-626-9669
shipherd@arizona.edu

Taja Vivens
South32 Hermosa
Lead Communications
520-425-3471
Taja.Vivens@south32.net